

THE CRUSADER'S BRIDE.

BY J. H. DANA.

CHAPTER I.

It was a beautiful morning, about the middle of the thirteenth century, when two knights, with a few followers, all travel soiled, rode down one of the romantic passes of the Rhine. By the crosses on their shoulders they appeared to be Crusaders; and by their conversation it was evident they were returning home. They were both young, and as one familiar spot of scenery after another broke on their sight, their spirits rose, and the younger began to hum a gay love song which he had learned far away in Palestine.

"Another turn, Sir Walter," said the elder, "and we see my uncle's castle. Ah! you blush, even through that Syrian complexion: well, well, man, never be ashamed, for Agnes will be wild with joy to see you. I wager she is even now thinking of, perhaps watching for you."

The younger knight's eyes glistened, and he involuntarily hastened the speed of his horse. After three years absence he was returning to claim the hand of his bride, the beautiful Agnes Wallenstein, known far and near as the flower of the Rhine. Five minutes brought him to the top of an acclivity, and pointing downward, he called gaily to his companion.

"Yonder is Wallenstein Castle, not two miles off. Sir Otho, put spurs to your horse, if you would keep up with me, for I am impatient to see dear Agnes."

"But, Sir Walter," said his companion, drawing in his rein as the keep of the dark fortress emerged suddenly from the morning mist, "as I live, there is no banner on the wall. Something is the matter, for my uncle, the stout old baron, would not suffer such a thing if he were alive."

The younger knight turned pale, but instantly replied with his former gaiety.

"It is nothing but an idle fear on your part. The banner has been forgotten by the drunken warder. All is right."

"But all is not right," said his companion,
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pointing to the dark tower, "for, by my good sword, is not that smoke, I see, curling from yon loop-hole? And there—there—the drawbridge is down."

"Then, in the saints name, on!" vehemently cried his companion; and, without further word, he plunged his rowels into his steed and went clanging down the rocky road, his friend and their few men-at-arms following rapidly.

A thousand fears tormented the young knight as he galloped furiously toward the castle. Was Agnes dead? or had an even more dreadful fate, a capture by some predatory band, overtaken her? To return, with high hopes after long years of absence, only to lose his bride filled the heart of the affianced lover with agony.

A few minutes confirmed their worst fears. As they gained the foot of the ascent, which led up to the fortress, a sight met their vision which sent the blood curdling back upon their hearts. The drawbridge was down; the gate flung wide open; the walls deserted; the battlements in part dismantled; no banner waved upon the barbican; and from a distant loop-hole, the smoke curling lazily outward, betokened that fire had finished what the sword had left undone. There were broken weapons scattered around, and other marks of a severe and desperate conflict. The truth broke at once upon them. The tower had been taken in some one of the daily feuds which then distracted society, and after having been sacked was deserted. What the fate of the inmates had been, the ferocity of the times, and the ruin before them too well betrayed. An utter silence reigned around them, broken only by the scream of a bird of prey, that sullenly took flight as they approached. And this was the gay welcome to which they had looked forward! Almost mad with his fears, the late joyous cavalier dashed wildly across the drawbridge, and reining in his steed in the deserted court-yard, shouted till the old walls echoed again to his trumpet tones.

"What ho!—seneschal—warder—varlets,—in the fiend's name where are ye? It is Walter de Rothsay calls. Ho there!" he continued in

desperation, as his voice echoed dismally through the empty court-yard, "what news of the Lady Agnes and her noble sire?—where are they?—come forth, ye knaves, here are no enemies but friends—come forth, or by the sacred wood of the cross, I will wring every drop of blood from your bodies, and hang them up for the carrion birds to pick! Ho there!" and as he finished he brought his lance heavily to the ground, waking a thousand echoes through the empty passages.

He was about turning away disheartened, when an old, gray-haired man emerged from a low vaulted doorway, stole a cautious glance at the young knight, and then with a voice weak from a recent wound, welcomed him by name.

"Hans!—as I am a belted knight," shouted the cavalier, leaping lightly from his steed, "but where is Agnes—where the good old baron—what hath done this rapine?—speak, old man—why stand you hesitating?"

"Alas! alas!" said the old man, while the tears filled his eyes, "that I have lived to see this day! Would God you had come this morning or come not at all! But," continued he, seeing the impatience of the young knight would brook no bounds, "you may not be too late for revenge: follow me!" and returning through the ancient door-way, he led the way into a small room that had been used for a chapel, and removing a cloak from what seemed a heap beneath the altar, disclosed to the gaze of the two knights the lifeless body of his master, the silvery hairs dabbled with blood, and the pallid countenance turned upward in the fixed gaze of death. The hands were decently crossed upon the breast. It was the last act the faithful man could do for him.

"This is what was Sir Lubin," solemnly said he as he raised the cloak, "they murdered him in cold blood, at his own hearth, after he had given up his sword!" and unable to restrain his feelings as he gazed upon the calm, quiet countenance, the faithful follower burst into tears.

The two knights stood gazing spell-bound upon the body, unable for a moment to find utterance for their feelings. That fearful silence was at length broken.

"By the tombs of my fathers," burst forth the young knight, fiercely clutching his sword as he apostrophized the body, "by my hopes of eternal life; by the holy cross I have fought for, and the mystery of the Saviour's passion, thou shalt be avenged! I swear by all that is sacred, I will track and punish thy murderers!" and he shook his clenched hand on high.

"And by this consecrated sword," ejaculated his brother knight solemnly, "I will devote my life and lands to the same holy work!" and

stooping down he kissed, with devout reverence, the cold hand of the dead.

"But Agnes—where, in God's name, is she?" eagerly asked the young knight; for in the tempest of that sudden passion he had forgotten even her.

In few and hurried words, the old servitor informed them that an enemy of the baron, who had long coveted the hand of Agnes, but been repulsed, and who was one of the most brutal of the wild nobles of the Upper Rhine, had suddenly attacked the tower the night before, carried it by overwhelming numbers, plundered, sacked, and fired it, and that morning at early dawn had departed, bearing off with them their booty, and carrying away the weeping Agnes and her hand-maid as prisoners, reserving them for a fate more dreadful than even death itself. The rest of the scanty garrison, without discrimination, had been put to the sword. The old man only had escaped by secreting himself in the hiding places none knew but his master and himself.

"Now, by St. Luke, this is too much," exclaimed the young knight, "I will raise my whole fief, and harry the palatinate with a thousand lances, if the cravens but injure a hair of her head. But which way went they?—what was their force?"

"They took the lower pass, and might count fifty," answered the old man eagerly.

"By taking the right hand road then," said Otho energetically, "we may come up to them before sunset—you, Walter, spur on with our few lances, and keep them in sight till I come, with the forces I can, at such short notice, muster at my castle. God speed you," he exclaimed, leaping into the saddle, "I will be with you before dark!"

"On, on!" shouted the impetuous young knight, waving his hand as an adieu. "Follow me, men, down into the valley—Rupert be our guide—we have kept greater odds at bay in Syria—let us strike now for our God, and for revenge!" and with his scanty but eager followers clattering behind him, the excited warrior dashed like a madman through the gateway, in another instant had cleared the drawbridge, and was seen galloping wildly down the rocky road, his iron trappings ringing as he went, and his long snowy plume streaming like a meteor on the wind.

CHAPTER II.

It was long past noon when a body of armed men, accompanied by two females, were seen winding down one of the lower passes of the Rhine. They marched with little care, as if not expecting a foe, and in a long, straggling, and somewhat disorderly line. Many of them carried,

beside their arms, various articles of plunder, which showed that they had been engaged in some successful foray. Their leader seemed the only watchful person among them, and was now to be seen marching at the front of his line, and now dropping to the rear, or riding by the side of the two females, in a vain endeavor to engage them in conversation. He was a tall, athletic man, armed to the teeth; and as his visor was up, you might see that he was possessed of a somewhat forbidding countenance, such as we always link with violence and cruelty. The bear borne as his cognizance, betokened him to be Hugo Von Leibnitz, the most lawless of all the titled freebooters of the Upper Rhine. He was returning from his morning's work; and the two females were Agnes and her hand-maid. Save, however, when he approached them, they were left to indulge their grief in silence, his rude retainers keeping aloof either by their master's orders, or from some lingering sparks of respect, or the indifference of hilarious excitement. It was in one of these solitary moments that the elder and humbler of the two females spoke.

"Oh! mistress Agnes, I cannot help but weep, for what does that savage knight mean to do with us? Villain that he is to murder my dear master, and carry us off we know not where," and wringing her hands she looked up weeping at her mistress.

"Hush, Winifred, hush," said the more heroic maiden, "let not the craven baron see that he can fill us with fears. We will confide ourselves to the virgin, and if the worst of our fears prove true, die as becomes us. I, for my part, will sooner perish by torture, than minister to the passion of a wretch like Sir Hugo, the murderer of my poor, dear father," and despite her utmost endeavors, the tears rose to her eyes, as she thought of her parent—"oh! Walter," she continued, "if thou wert only nigh I might hope for some relief, though even thy sword could'st never bring the dead to life. But," she continued, drying her tears as Sir Hugo rode up to them, "never shall our brutal victor see how it moveth me. I am a baron's child, and the daughter of his foe. What now, sir?" and drawing herself proudly up, she looked a queen about to hear a message from her slave.

"Lady!" said the somewhat abashed freebooter, quailing before her flashing eye, "there is need that you stop a season, as we would not pollute your presence with the din of strife. There are armed men riding for the pass, and the sight of so fair a prize might breed contention even among friends. So we shall even ask you to dismount, and retire awhile to yon old ruin on the cliff."

"Lead on!" haughtily said the maiden, and following their guide, the two females soon found themselves in an old, decayed tower, built perhaps by the Romans centuries before, and now almost imbedded in luxuriant evergreens and loose soil, washed down by the rains. It crowned a bold cliff, overhanging the pass, and commanded a view of the valley for miles. The only approach to it was by a dilapidated doorway, which as soon as they had entered, was blocked up by a huge mass of rock from without. Such resorts for safety, were neither rare, nor uncommon to be used in those wild and stormy times.

The cause of this sudden alarm was soon evident. Away to the north, just emerging from the rocky defile, a band of men-at-arms, few in number but admirably equipped, were seen dashing at a rapid pace toward the pass; while as they gallantly advanced, the sun glittered from breast-plate, helmet, and lance-head, almost dazzling the eye of the beholder.

"Praised be the virgin!" said Winifred, "they are friends sent by heaven to rescue us from the hands of these robbers—who can they be?"

"Ah! my good Winifred," sadly answered her mistress, "I fear me they are but idle stragglers, riding in such hot haste only because they fear to be late at some wassail."

"No, no, they take not the river road, but turn off into this narrower and less frequented path. They ride too as in pursuit."

"God send it may be so—but who is there in all the empire to espouse my poor quarrel; my sire is no more," she added with a flood of tears, "my cousin is in Palestine, and Walter! little does he think how great a danger I am in. Oh! did he but dream of it how would he fly to my aid."

"Cheer, cheer ye, my lady," suddenly exclaimed the hand-maiden, who had clambered up to a position whence she had a more perfect view of the strangers, "yonder they come, they are friends, for they drive in the rear of the foe."

"And oh! holy mother—no—yes—it is, it is," cried Agnes with clasped hands, as she again caught sight of them, "there is the crest of Walter, the very scarf I brodered for him, the saints be praised for his timely succor!" and unable to sustain her feelings, she fell back almost fainting against the ruinous wall.

"Oh! do but see how gallantly he rides, the noble young lord," ejaculated the hand-maiden, now carried away with joy as she laughed and cried by turns.

"I fear me he comes only to destruction," suddenly said Agnes starting up, and losing all thought of her own danger in her fears for him. "He has but a score of men, and Sir Hugo's

freebooters are three to one. They command the pass too. Oh! that we could warn him of his danger—Winifred, cannot you cry so as to be heard?"

"It cannot be," answered the girl, "for my voice would not reach half way, and if any of these villains below were to hear us they would cut both our throats in a twinkling. But they come nearer—it will soon be worthless too, for the strife will be begun."

CHAPTER III.

THE aspect of the two forces was terribly unequal. The freebooters had hastily been drawn up across the narrow pathway, and now sat on their motionless horses, like iron statues, waiting the attack. Nor did they pause long. Leading on his followers, the gallant young knight couched his lance, stooped an instant lowly in his saddle, and then with his little band, drove like a whirlwind down upon his foe. A moment they were seen sweeping along, and Agnes had scarcely ejaculated, "The saints preserve him!" before the shock of meeting took place, their lances were splintered to the head, and amid a cloud of dust a half a score of men went headlong to the earth. The position Agnes occupied was, however, less favorable than the loftier one gained by her hand-maid, and her view of the contest was, therefore, limited and uncertain. Nor was there space for more than Winifred at the loop-hole above.

"What see you, quick, Winifred, quick?" said Agnes eagerly.

"I see the young knight thundering with his huge sword, as if he were a giant—there he has clove one to the chin—again he cuts another down—Sir Hugo presses toward him—he is almost surrounded—they cross swords—the din and clash of the conflict—oh God! he is down—no! he has broken out like a lion at bay—his gallant followers crowd around him, he hews his way out!"

"What see you now?" gasped Agnes, straining her eyes to catch a view of the combat through the clustering trees, as her hand-maiden paused a moment to breathe.

"I see him flying hither and thither, rallying his men—they have all flung away their lances, and are fighting hand to hand. Now he rushes into the midst of the foe—again they surround him—he strikes right and left like a hero—now backing his horse on those behind, now rushing forward and cleaving them down like play-things. Alas! he is sore oppressed—he is down, and this time, holy virgin! forever—No! his horse was only surrounded—his brave retainers have brought him another—he is free once more—he rallies his men

again—they fight like fiends, and now are driven struggling down the pass."

"Do you see nothing more?"

"I see Sir Hugo urging his men down—Sir Walter rallies his broken band and slowly gives way—they surely will not desert us?—but they cannot help it, for scarce ten are left alive—they retreat—there is no help—he will be made a prisoner—no, God be praised! a knight with a heron plume for his crest, followed by a couple of score of lances, is thundering down the hill—he cries—what was it?—oh! can it be Sir Otho?"

"Holy virgin! it is," ejaculated Agnes, with difficulty gaining a foothold beside her maiden, "it is my cousin, yes, hark! there rings his war-cry—see how he spurs to the conflict—he is by Walter's side—they charge like the shock of an earthquake—the ranks of our conquerors give way—Sir Hugo turns, he flies, holy virgin! how they scour along beneath us—Walter! Walter!" shouted Agnes, as the two forces, pursuing and pursued, swept wildly past, "here is your own Agnes—they are gone—but oh! my father, thou art avenged," and in another instant the cries of the combatants, the ringing of their arms, and the clatter of their horses' hoofs had died in the distance, and it seemed to the two deserted maidens, as if during the last few exciting minutes they had been gazing on some wild and shadowy phantasmagoria, such as we behold in a dream.

For more than an hour they remained in their imprisoned situation, and as the moments crept by without the return of the victors, the two lonely maidens began to yield to their fears. If any stray straggler should return from the defeated band, they knew their sex would be of no avail to protect them from insult or vengeance—and even were none to seek the scene of their defeat, it might be hours, or perhaps days, before the victors should come back. Even if they returned it was questionable if they would approach the ruin. One doubt gave place to another—and when they endeavored to escape, they found the rock that blocked up the entrance immovable, even by their united strength. At last they gave up in despair, and sat down calmly to wait their fate. The hand-maiden, before whose mind a thousand dangers flitted, began to wring her hands in the extremity of her distress; but her more heroic mistress, after a few more useless attempts to escape, only sat herself down to watch from the loop-hole. Meanwhile the day were on, and the sun wheeled his broad circle into the bosom of the Rhine, lengthening the shadows of the hills around, and burying the valleys in the gloom of twilight. The breeze came damp from the river, and the birds,

returning to their nests, sailed slowly by. In vain the prisoners essayed, as a last resort, to scale the ruinous walls. Their fears were rising into agony, when suddenly the pursuers returned by another route to the scene of the strife, and were seen down the pass busied upon the field of the late conflict. But now a new fear arose. The distance might prevent their cries from being heard. They knew, however, this to be their only hope, and raising their feeble voices they shouted aloud for aid. They were not heard. Agnes could see the plume of her lover faintly waving in the gathering darkness, and her heart died within her when she thought he might depart, and leave her to the mercy of her captors, who would be sure to return for her in the morning. Again and again they united their voices, but still it was in vain. Suddenly they heard the leaves rustle nigh, but it was only a huge night-bird, startled from its drowsy perch, by their repeated cries, that sailed slowly and darkly away down the defile—and then all was still.

"Oh! what shall we do?" said Winifred in despair, "they cannot hear us, and we shall be left to die. I vow a silver candle to the Virgin if we escape."

"Stop," said Agnes with sudden energy, "here is my falcon call, I had forgot I wore it yesterday, and in this morning's agony I put it on unthinkingly. Sancta Maria be praised, for it shall be the means of our release," and raising it to her lips, she blew a long, shrill call, such as in other days her lover himself had taught her.

"They hear it," gasped the hand-maiden, "see, they stop and look around—another, dear lady."

The maiden blew a yet shriller call upon the whistle, exerting all her little strength; and when she ceased, her cheek flushed, her eye gleamed, and her snowy bosom heaved with the excitement.

"They come," she cried, as the young knight turned, and looking up doubtingly toward the cliff, paused in rapt attention, "wave my veil on high—the holy martyrs be praised—they see it—they dash up the height—they are here, Walter, dear Walter, it is your own Agnes that speaks," and in another instant the brawny arms of the knights had hurled away the obstruction from the door, and with a joyful bound Agnes sprung toward her lover, and overcame with mingled gladness and excitement, had fainted in his arms. Bearing her hastily from the rude gaze of his followers, he tore off his gauntlet, bathed her temples with his own hand, and when at last she faintly opened her eyes, he pressed her to his bosom, and covered her lips with kisses.

home to the proud halls of his fathers, the fair and gentle Agnes. Old men blessed her as she passed, young mothers held out their babes in their arms to gaze upon her face, and girls strewed flowers in her path, and welcomed her to her future home with songs. Many a sweet night afterward, when the vine-hills were clad with their purple fruit, and the maidens had returned from gathering the blushing grape, would the seigneur and his lady gaze upon their merry revels, as they danced upon the greensward in the gay moonlight.



It was a gay and merry time in the valley of the Loire, when the young Lord of Rothsay, led

THE COUSINS.

A TALE OF THE CRESCENT CITY.

BY "THE POOR SCHOLAR."

A LOVELY morning. Five hundred ships bearing the flags of almost every commercial nation, are lying in the crescent harbor. The French barque "Le Fleur" has just arrived from Havre, and is letting go her anchor in the middle of the stream opposite the Rue Poydras. The tri-color is drooping against the mizzen mast, and the sails hang loosely from the yards as though resting after the long and tempestuous voyage. The courses are drawn up in graceful festoons. Shore boats laden with fruits and vegetables, and skiffs of negro watermen hover about, the six-oared gig of the custom-house is riding alongside of the gangway—curious eyes are peering through shrouds and over bulwarks, upon the red brick and painted walls of the "Crescent City," now struggling into the golden sunlight, and the voice of life and business rings cheerily around.

In the midst of the din and the hum, and the merry laughter, two gentlemen issue from the cabin. One is the captain of the "Le Fleur." The other is evidently a passenger, and his dress together with the graceful *negligé* of his manner at once bespeak the fashionable Parisian gentleman. He is young and handsome, and seems withal of a generous and noble nature. He is bent on going ashore. They shake hands—"Adieu, M. Louvret," says the captain, "I am sorry you leave us so soon—you must visit me often while the 'Le Fleur' remains, and help me out with that lot of champagne—there are yet some bottles left."

"That I shall, Monsieur Le Capitaine, you will find me a daily visitor as long as the wine lasts."

"Or until you get enamored of some pretty Creole—take care, take care, M. Louvret, it is a dangerous city, and I already feel a father's tenderness for you."

"Thank you, M. Le Capitaine, but I have left my heart behind me in gay Paris."

"If so you will never return to claim it."

"How so?"

"You will be married in less than three months—I expect to drink Madame Louvret's health before the Le Fleur sails—a bet for a dozen bottles!"

"I take your bet—but tell me why do you think so?"

"Beauty, *ma foi*—they are the prettiest creatures in the world."

"By my faith, captain, you make me impatient to be ashore—adieu!"

"There are some noble fortunes—success!"

"Fear not—fear not—*au revoir*!"

So saying the young man leaped upon the gangway and motioned to a waterman.

"Bring your boat alongside."

"Dat I will, massa."

"Steward my trunk—the yellow one—see the others sent after to my hotel."

In a moment the waterman is under the gangway—the trunk is lowered, and the young man springing down the ropes, seats himself in the stern of the skiff and is rowed toward the shore. His eye roams along the semicircle of houses.

"Quite a city, by Jove—it must have grown amazingly since our Parisian geographers last visited it—the captain may be right—pretty—I have heard so at Paris, let me see—ha! a capital idea—I must learn something of transatlantic life before presenting myself to my worthy uncle—one hundred Louis left and some odds—time enough to surrender when our ammunition is spent—darkee!"

"Massa."

"Which is your best hotel?"

"Massa me bleeve 'm St. Charle—Messa Mudge & Water."

The skiff soon struck against the Levee.

"Dar is de St. Charle cab, massa."

"Where?"

"De nigga wif de black boss."

The "nigga" thus referred to, seeing himself pointed at, immediately left his cab, and approaching the skiff, inquired, "St. Charles, sir?"

"Yes—here, take this trunk."

The trunk is shouldered, and the young man taking his seat in the carriage is driven down the Rue Poydras to St. Charles, and there deposited at the door of the hotel. He enters the large bar-room, and having swallowed a glass of wine, registers his name as "Louis Louvret, Paris, France."

"Your room, sir, is No. 25—shall I show you the way?"

"Not now—I wish to walk around."

The *salon de café* was not strange to Louvret—plenty of them in Paris—so after lounging a moment in one of the chairs, he drew on his gloves, took up his hat and cane, and sallied into the street—it was about eleven o'clock. He walked down St. Charles to Canal—no ladies—crossed Canal and entered the Rue Royale—no ladies yet—he next crossed over to the Place d'Armes, and still no ladies!

"*Le diable*," said he as he stood in front of the old cathedral, "they're not heathens! here's a

church, but where the deuce do they keep their ladies?—they must be Turks—it's a fair morning, nay, a most tempting one, and I've walked over a mile to meet nothing female save Dutch fraus and negro fishmongers. By Jove, I believe the old sea dog has been quizzing me," and he walked toward the door of the cathedral which was standing open—"ha! what comes here? I must stand aside and observe," so saying he took his station by one of the massive pillars. Two ladies came slowly up the aisle—they were both dressed in black. One was young, and as well as Louvret could judge through a black lace veil—beautiful. Her figure, at all events, was perfect. The other might have been her aunt or her mother, or indeed her grand-mother as far as age was concerned. They were arm in arm, the younger on the right. The latter carried in her hand a pretty bouquet of flowers. As they approached the fount she dipped the flowers in the sacred water and sprinkled it lightly over her companion and herself. They both made the sign of the cross and passed toward the door. As they issued into the street where Louvret was standing, the younger lady lifted the corner of her veil with an air that seemed to say, "here's something for you to dream about!" then drawing it down coquetishly she gave her arm to the elder, and they walked away in the direction of the Rue Chartres. The glance of that eye, and the motion of that lip—for the lip *had* pouted—so bewildered the young Frenchman that it was some time before he gained self-possession to follow them, and when he did it was to no purpose. They were gone! He ran up Chartres—then back again, then up and down every one of the numerous alleys in the rear of the cathedral. In one of these he met a negress carrying hot coffee, which he came near causing her to spill.

"Did you see two ladies in black?"

"Not dis day, massa—why, Gorramity, massa mad," shouted the wench as he turned abruptly from her and ran toward the Rue Royale. He did seem mad. He overturned a coffee table and threw down a parrot's cage, and ran over three fruitsellers, and kicked over a kettle of gumbo, and but for his good looks and fine clothes he might have had more hurled after him than maledictions. Breathless he stopped at the corner of a court—his pursuers now came up.

"You have broken my cage, monsieur."

"What's the damage?"

"One piastre, monsieur."

"Here, take it."

"You hab spilled my coffee, massa, and broken my cups."

"Here, here—"

So saying he turned up Rue Royale in the

direction of the St. Charles' Hotel, muttering to himself as he went along, "*Le Capitaine* is right. *Mon Dieu*, what an eye! and such grace! oh, curse my stupidity to lose them so—I shall meet them again if I should have to stand sentry at the church for six weeks—*le diable!* how hot!" He had now reached the hotel, and the gong was sounding for dinner.

After dinner the young Parisian again sought the drinking saloon, and taking his seat in one of Mudge's arm chairs, began to speculate on the adventure of the morning.

"Married—no—no—she's too young—and in mourning, I wonder who it is for—it may be her father or her brother—but then she seemed so pleasant—by Jove it must be for a husband—bah! no!—the other lady was in black as well as she—maybe it is the fashion—and then such a smile—oh, she must have been to confessional, and was returning with a light conscience—what need has she to go to confessional?—such a creature must be incapable of sinning," and thus ran his thoughts while the eyes of the young Frenchman wandered around the saloon—they rested for a moment on a 'four sheet poster,' 'Theatre d'Orleans, Lucia di Lammermoor, Mademoiselle Calvé, Prima Donna, &c.' Parbleu! an opera among these Indians! I shall go, out of curiosity, and who knows but the same motive may bring my incognito thither?—three o'clock—three to seven, four hours—how shall I put them in—on board the '*Le Fleur*,' that's it—capital idea—confess myself to *Le Capitaine*—the old shark has cruized in these waters before—perhaps he may assist me," and Louvret walked out of the saloon and was soon on board the "*Le Fleur*," and discussing a bottle of his favorite champagne with the worthy captain.

At seven o'clock precisely two strangers entered the Theatre d'Orleans and took their seats in the dress circle. They were as the reader will guess the young Frenchman, Louis Louvret, and the captain of the "*Le Fleur*."

"*Capitaine* you were right—they *are* beautiful, beautiful all—but if she were only here, you would not see one of those lovely faces that now surround us."

"Have patience, my boy—she may come in yet."

"Ah, *Capitaine*, I fear not—I first saw her in church."

"And I hope you'll soon see her in a church again, if her fortune corresponds with her beauty."

"Do not speak of the fortune, I would marry her to-morrow if she was not worth a single sous—ha! see! it is her figure! yes, and her—*sacre*, a gentleman. See! she is looking this way, *le diable*, she enters the closed box—lost—lost—lost!"

It was indeed the lady whom Louvret had seen in the cathedral who entered the box. She was leaning upon the arm of a young man, whom any one would have taken for her brother, but a blind man, or a jealous lover. There are many boxes in the Theatre d'Orleans into which the vulgar eye has never yet peeped. These pretty exclusives are so constructed Venetian blind fashion, that they are impenetrable to the gaze of the pit bourgeoisie, while the occupants from within can see the whole house. It was one of these ambuscades that the mysterious lady and her cavalier entered, and the exclamation uttered by young Louvret was not without its meaning, as unless the lady felt otherwise disposed she would there be invisible during the whole of the performances. She did, however, feel otherwise disposed, and she had scarcely entered the box when a small, white hand pushed aside the curtain, and the same eye that had so bewildered the young Frenchman in the morning, now looked through a lorgnon, first upon the stage, then around the parquette and dress circle. There was still the same tantalizing smile—the same expression of gaiety on her dark brunette features, but she had changed her mourning dress for one of white—and her beautiful hair from the contrast was more brilliant and glossy. Louvret sat without speaking—his whole attention was directed toward the fair creature. Her eye rests upon him—ha! she blushes and turns away—she is or pretends to be looking at Calvé—see her eye again returns to the Frenchman who still gazes ardently upon her—she recollects the affair of the morning. Besides Louvret is not a man likely to be so soon forgotten—by a lady—and then his running over the fruit-sellers and scattering their fruit—she saw all this from the window of her carriage—Louis never thought of the carriage—she turns away—she looks again until her eyes meet those of the young Frenchman in a fixed and silent gaze!

"By Neptune, Louvret, your choice is good, and I am blind if she's not looking this way—see that—she must be *bon ton* too—for those seats belong to the aristocracy—I'll win the dozen in a week—happy dog, you have interested her already."

Louis hardly heeded the whisperings of the captain, but with soul beaming eyes, he remained gazing on the fair creature who had so captivated him. The curtain was at last drawn down, but the young Frenchman still fancied a pair of dark orbs glancing upon him through the bars of the Venetian.

The performance was over, and by the time Louvret and his companion made their way to the door, the young lady was just entering her carriage.

"Come, captain, we'll follow—cabman, drive after that carriage!" and they entered a cab. There were twenty carriages starting in different directions. The cabman not understanding the one which he was to follow drove after the first that offered. The carriage issued into Rue Chartres, and down Rue Chartres into Cas Calvo. It stopped before a large mansion in the Faubourg Clouet, and an old gentleman getting out gave some directions to the driver, who was his servant.

"*Le diable!* we have followed the wrong carriage—how unfortunate—well we will sleep together, captain—drive to the St. Charles hotel," and in a few minutes the disappointed party were set down at their destination.

Next morning saw Louis in the cathedral, and next evening at the theatre, and so on for nearly a week, but the beautiful brunette was nowhere to be met with. He attended balls, churches and theatres in vain. "Where could she have gone—she may have been only a visiter to the city, but a thought strikes me—I will bribe the box-keeper at the Theatre d'Orleans to tell me who the box belongs to—that will lead to something at least. Let me see, this is the morning I had fixed for my walk to the battle-ground—I shall go there first, I can call at the theatre on my return, or to-night. By my faith, the hundred louis are fast going, I will soon have to surrender at discretion—the old gentleman's wealthy too—so says report," and Louis sallied forth and walked through the city toward the battle-ground. He reached the spot where thousands were sacrificed on the altar of liberty, and the heart of the young Frenchman bounded with enthusiasm when he remembered that they who fell were his foes, the foes of his beloved France. He was returning toward the city when he saw an open carriage driving toward him containing a lady and gentleman. Suddenly the carriage stopped, and the gentleman stepping out crossed over to the fence with the intention of gathering some wild flowers, seemingly at the desire of the lady. A steamboat made her appearance round a bend of the river. The horses taking fright plunged violently, and then galloped off in the direction where Louvret was standing. Before the gentleman could reach them they had passed him and were now going at full speed. Immediately in front was a deep gully crossed by a narrow bridge of cypress logs. The approach to this bridge was steep and rough, and it was impossible for the carriage to pass over it safely at such speed, it must, therefore, be dashed into the bayou. Louvret saw this, and placing himself on one side of the path, he awaited their coming up. As the horses came opposite, he

drew a pistol and firing, shot the left hand horse through the head. The animal dropped instantly, and the off horse after one or two plunges became entangled and fell also. The sudden stopping of the landau threw the young lady forward, but she fell unhurt in the arms of the Frenchman, whose surprise only equalled his pleasure, at recognizing the features that had already impressed him so deeply.*

The thanks of the gentleman who had now come up were poured forth profusely. He was the brother of the lady who had so narrowly escaped. This piece of information was any thing but displeasing to Louis.

"I am sorry to have been under the necessity of killing what seems to have been a very fine horse."

"Do not think of that, monsieur, that can be easily replaced; but how are we ever to repay your bravery and coolness? Oh, God! look there, Eugenie, not a chance would there have been!" and he pointed at the fearful gully, on the very brink of which the horses had fallen.

The girl looked toward the bridge, and then her glance rested for a moment on the face of the young Frenchman. Their eyes met, and in hers was an expression that sufficiently thanked him for all that he had accomplished.

"May I know the name of my sister's preserver?" inquired the gentleman.

"Louis Louvret, Paris."

"Mine is Eugene De Sand, and she is my only sister, Eugenie—our parents are dead—you will not refuse to accompany us to our chateau, there it is." He pointed to a fine mansion half a mile from the road.

Louis assented.

"Sister, you will conduct M. Louvret round by the gate, while I run across the plantation for some servants to relieve this horse."

The parties started, De Sand leaping over the fence and crossing a sugar field, while Louvret offering his arm to Eugenie, walked toward the front gate of the plantation.

From that time Louis Louvret and Eugene were bosom friends. From that time Louis Louvret and Eugenie were lovers. Eugene interfered not with his sister's attachment. He saw that Louvret was a gentleman—no one could doubt it—and the generous youth never dreamed of inquiring into his pedigree.

The visits of Louvret to the chateau were frequent. One evening Eugene and Louis were sitting together in the piazza—Eugenie had retired.

"M. De Sand, I have a favor to ask from you."

"Name it, my friend."

"Two weeks ago I landed in New Orleans. On my arrival I went strolling about to view your city. I stood before the cathedral. The doors were open. Two ladies came up the aisle—one of them was young, and as I thought and think still, the most beautiful creature I had ever beheld. From that moment I loved her—on the same evening I attended the opera, the lady was there also. I gazed upon her almost impertinently, for I could not master my feelings—our eyes met, and I was glad to see that her looks did not repulse me—still I was ignorant of either the lady's name or family. An accident to which you were a witness, has made me acquainted with both. Eugene De Sand, the favor I would ask you to bestow, is, the hand of your sister."

"Does my sister desire it?"

"She does—I have just now received from her lips the assurance that my love is returned. You are silent, M. De Sand—you would know something of my family and fortune—you are right. I have an uncle here, if I mistake not, who will answer your questions."

"You wrong me, M. Louvret—I too was thinking of an uncle—Eugenie and myself are both under age—our uncle and guardian resides in the city—there is something in our late father's will about marrying with uncle's consent—if you can only gain his, you have mine already."

"Your uncle's name?"

"Pierre Mignon."

"Mignon!"

"Yes—you seem surprised."

"Oh, no—I have heard the name before."

"Doubtless!—he is wealthy and well known in the city."

"I think I may gain his consent."

"I shall assist you, and should we fail, then—"

"Then, what?"

"I shall assist you to run away with Eugenie and trust to chance for a reconciliation—I know she loves you and I know you are worthy of her."

"Generous friend, I long more than ever to call you brother."

A few minutes after, Louvret mounted his horse and rode toward the city, muttering as he left the plantation,

"These, these are the Creole cousins of whom my uncle wrote me—I had forgotten the name—sweet Eugenie!"

In an hour afterward, a carriage was seen approaching the chateau. It stopped in front of the mansion, and Pierre Mignon, a fine looking old Frenchman stepped out, followed by the young Parisian—Eugene and Eugenie were in the piazza. The uncle entered and introduced Louis Louvret as his nephew from Paris. The joy of young De Sand knew no bounds at this

* An actual occurrence.

discovery, but the feeling that thrilled Louis and Eugenie as their hands and eyes met was of a deeper and sweeter kind than that inspired by relationship. Louis explained his adventures to his uncle, and as may be supposed his consent to the union was not hard to obtain. The marriage took place the following week. The captain of the "Le Fleur" was one of the guests, and as he jocularly reminded Louis of their wager he invited the whole party to a *dejeuner* on board his beautiful barque, which came off on the following day. Louis was soon settled upon a fine plantation presented to him by his uncle, and when the "Le Fleur" returned to Havre she carried out an hundred bales of fine cotton marked "Louis Louvret."

THE PILOT'S BOY.

BY CHARLES J. PETERSON.

THE storm raged loud and fierce. The wind swept wildly over the waste of waters, catching the spray in its embrace and hurling it furiously onward, so that the ocean seemed a vast sheet of foam. The clouds hung low and dark, scowling on the terrible vortex below. It was one of the most awful tempests that had for years devastated the Atlantic coast.

On a low sandy beach, against which the waves thundered until the ground shook beneath them, stood a mother and her daughter, gazing anxiously seaward, regardless of the storm. So powerful was the wind that they could with difficulty stand; yet they fearlessly kept their watch, shading their eyes with their hands to keep off the spray, apparently looking for some object on the ocean. Suddenly the child cried,

"Mother—there they are!"

She pointed with a trembling finger as she spoke, and following its direction, the mother beheld a white speck, like a flake of snow, amid the dark waters on the horizon. It rose and fell, but kept steadily increasing in size, as if approaching.

"Oh! Lord, I thank thee," said the mother, clasping her hands and looking up to heaven. "The father of my babes yet lives: save him, for thy sake."

It would have melted the sternest heart to have heard the deep emotion with which she breathed that prayer. Then with hands clasped before her she stood silent, watching the little barque which contained her husband and her only boy.

And bravely did that gallant craft struggle through the tempest. Now it would be lost to sight in a whirlwind of foam as it plunged through a head-sea, and now it would re-appear, its white sail glancing like the wing of a gull. At times the wind would press with such force on the close-reefed canvass as to lay the mast nearly level with the billows, so that the mother's heart sank within her, for it seemed then as if the brave barque would never recover herself; and again the frail spar would struggle upward, and the boat skim along for a space, like a spirit walking the deep.

For nearly half an hour the little barque was thus visible; and during that period the suspense of the mother was worse than the most intolerable agony. One while she saw herself bereft of those she loved, and again hope would resume its sway in her bosom, only, however, to be again overthrown by the next surge that broke over the devoted craft. It seemed a miracle that the



boat had lived so long; and even the sanguine hopes of a mother could not long persuade her she should see her darling boy again.

At length one mountainous billow was seen advancing, its huge breast lifting itself slowly up, the masses of waters piling one over another, until they seemed to mingle with the black clouds above: then a speck of foam suddenly appeared on the extreme top of the wave, which spreading rapidly to right and left until the crest was everywhere crowned with it, the huge bulk of piled up waters tumbled headlong, and the boat, which had been seen a second before laboring in the trough of the sea beneath, was lost to sight forever in the white and chafing whirlpool.

The mother held her breath as the waters fell, and remained, like one struck by a basilisk, gazing on the fierce vortex, as if hoping, even against hope, that the boat would re-appear; but moment after moment passed, until it seemed to her as if hours had elapsed, and yet no sign of the barque was visible. At length the waters partially subsided; another billow swept over the place where the first had broken; and then the mast of the little craft rolled upward; but the hull was nowhere visible.

"They are lost—oh! my dear father—and Harry—mother can't you save them?" said the child, in accents of the most heart-breaking grief.

But the mother answered not. She looked wildly at her daughter, and then ran, like one distracted, to the edge of the surf, venturing so far down with the undertow that it appeared incredible she could escape the angry breakers. Here she strained her eyes again to see if she could catch any glimpse of the crew of the ill-fated boat. But nothing was visible except the black surges, capped with foam; and no sound was heard but the roar of the hurricane.

"Oh! Father in heaven," she cried, in accents of that stony grief, which once heard lives forever in the memory, "save my child—save him even yet!"

At that instant a dark mass appeared on the crest of a breaker, and with a cry of joy the mother saw the form of her darling boy close at hand. The next moment the body was hurled toward her, and rushing recklessly into the surf, she caught the child by his clothes and hurried inward to gain the dry land, before a second surge should overtake her. Twice she was struck down before reaching the beach, and twice the weeping daughter lost sight of her parent; but the energy of the mother finally triumphed, and she bore her prize to land and laid the senseless form on the beach. The moment after the hardy frame of the pilot was seen struggling with the surf, and he too at length

reached the shore in safety. The first object that met his gaze was the body of his darling extended on the beach.

"My boy!—my boy!" he cried, casting himself beside it. "Oh! God he is dead," was his heart-broken exclamation; and wringing his hands, he looked up to heaven, his whole face convulsed with the tearless agony of a bereaved father.

It was a touching spectacle. In the foreground lay the figure of the boy, cold and wet, his beautiful hair washed back from his face, and his little arm extended by his side, as if he had been sleeping. Over him knelt the afflicted mother, her form half prostrate on his, and her face buried in her hands. Her garments and those of the father were flying wildly in the wind. The background of the picture was filled up by the white foam of the surf, and the whirling masses of clouds overhead. In the distance, scarcely visible through the darkness of approaching night, was a little fishing village.

"But may he not yet live?" suddenly said the mother, as if a new hope had struck her, "oh! if we had him at home, we might do something for him."

The father started up from his momentary stupor, and every feature of his face was now instinct with energy. Catching the senseless body in his arms, without a word, he strode onward toward the village almost on a run, the rest of his family following eagerly behind, the mother in breathless silence, her heart agitated with hope and fear alternately, and the daughter clinging to her dress and sobbing as if her heart would break.

The neighbors met them before they reached their home, all eager to lend their aid; for they knew that the pilot had been abroad that day and the rumor of his wreck soon reached every heart. The senseless body was laid on the bed: those who could be of service remained in the room; and the rest anxiously waited the result in the apartment without. After some time hopelessly spent in the attempt to revive him, and when the neighbors were beginning to despair, the mother thought she saw some faint signs of life. Their exertions were now redoubled, and at length he faintly breathed.

"My boy lives," said the mother fervently, and though she breathed no prayer in words, her heart was poured out in thankfulness to her Father in heaven as she looked on.

Before the night was very far spent, the child, thus rescued from the jaws of death, was able to sit up; and many and heartfelt were the thanks for his recovery breathed to heaven that night by the mothers of the little fishing village, for each felt that it might yet be to her own darling, as it had been that day to the Pilot's Boy.

ELLEN,

THE ROSE OF GREENWOOD GLEN.

BY CAROLINE ORNE.

GREENWOOD GLEN was one of those secluded and lovely spots where the spirit worn and weary with the noise and turmoil of the busy city and crowded mart, would for awhile love to repose as the traveller delights to turn aside from the dusty highway to rest in the shade of the rustling tree. A wood-covered cottage was nestled in its bosom, over one end of which crept a grape-vine, while a number of scraggy lilacs of great height and luxuriance, intermingled with white and red rose-bushes, shaded the windows in front. A winding footpath which led from the road to the cottage, made many a graceful curve to avoid a fine tree spared by the woodman's axe, or a clump of saplings, whose light foliage quivered at each passing breeze. The glen was sheltered on the north and east by a fine old woodland, the haunt of the blue-bird and thrush and the merry black-bird, which evening and morning they made vocal with their melody. The inhabitants of the cottage were Mrs. Harlowe, a widow lady about thirty years of age, and a man and his wife, whom she hired to perform the necessary labor.

It was a lovely evening in June, and Mrs. Harlowe sat at an open window half screened by a rose-bush in full bloom, when she saw a chaise stop opposite the footpath. A gentleman alighted, and securing the horse to a protruding limb of an apple-tree, entered the path. He was a stranger, and whatever curiosity she might feel to obtain a sight of his features, was baffled by his hat being placed so as to shade his forehead and eyes, and by a silk handkerchief which muffled the lower part of his face. His mien and dress, however, were those of a gentleman, and Mrs. Harlowe thought he could not be more than two or three and twenty. He did not approach very near the cottage, though he evidently inspected it, as well as the adjacent grounds, with much care. He lingered till the deepening twilight began to wrap objects in obscurity, when he returned to the chaise and drove rapidly away in the direction of the hotel, about a mile distant. The curiosity of Mrs. Harlowe was considerably excited as to what might be his object, and that of Joe Sanders and Amy his wife still more, who were not without their fears that he might be a robber, who would return at midnight for the purpose of breaking into the house. Fear, not unfrequently like jealousy, "makes the meat it feeds on," and the worthy couple, by pondering upon the matter became so alarmed, that could they have obtained Mrs. Harlowe's consent, they

would have gone for their next neighbor to assist them in keeping watch. The next morning Sanders rose by day and walked to the hotel on purpose to ascertain if the stranger called there.

"If you mean the stylish looking gentleman," said the landlord, "with the new-fashioned chaise and the fine black horse—he not only called but staid all night. If you had been ten minutes sooner you might have seen him."

"I wish I had—I wouldn't have valued a four-pence more than the snap of my finger to have had a fair sight of him. Did he tell you his name?"

"Yes, he said his name was Smith, and he enquired if I thought Greenwood Glen could be purchased."

"Ah," said Sanders with an exceedingly wise look, "I have a key to the mystery now."

"What mystery?" said the landlord.

"Why he came last evening into the glen, and looked around as sharp as if he were searching for a needle in a hay-mow. The widow and Amy thought he was a robber, and would have been half scared out of their wits had I not put on the courage of the lion, as it were."

"I should not wonder if he proved himself a robber after all," said the landlord.

"Do you really think so?" said Sanders with a look that belied his recent boast.

"Yes, I should not wonder if he attempted to rob Mrs. Harlowe of her heart. He asked me a score of questions about her. First he enquired if she had been well educated—then how old she was, and if she were fond of gossip, and above all, if she were thought to have a good disposition. But what seemed rather strange to me, he neither enquired whether she was plain or handsome. I didn't let him remain in ignorance on that point, however, but told him that she was the handsomest woman in the place, and that one would judge by her looks that she was about twenty-five, which is true, for she at least looks five years younger than she is. 'Not more than twenty-five?' said he, suddenly breaking in upon me. 'I should much rather that she were thirty or thirty-five.' 'Oh, well,' said I, 'perhaps I am mistaken, and upon reflection I rather think she is thirty.' 'That is better,' he replied, and after I had assured him half a dozen times that her disposition was mild as a May morning, he said he would retire to his sleeping apartment, as he must start by day-break."

When Joe Sanders returned, he faithfully repeated to Mrs. Harlowe all that had been told him by the landlord. She could not help having the thought pass through her mind that the stranger who probably had at some time seen her, might return to sue for her hand, and then

the question arose "could he win it?" It was soon answered, "No," said she, "the hand that has planted the evergreen and the forget-me-not on Albert Harlowe's grave, shall always remain free to tend them."

A week passed on, and as nothing was heard either directly or indirectly from the inquisitive Mr. Smith, people began to dismiss him from their thoughts. The mind of Mrs. Harlowe, however, who, on the evening that completed the week, happened to seat herself at the same window as when he had appeared in the glen, naturally reverted to him. As she was vainly attempting to conjecture for the fiftieth time what could possibly be his object, Joe Sanders, who had been to the post-office for the weekly paper, entered the apartment and handed her a letter.

"Cousin Mary has written at last, then," said she, taking the letter.

But a glance told her that the firm and dashing characters inscribed on its back were not traced by the delicate hand of her cousin, and with some trepidation she broke the seal. The letter was dated at an obscure town about twenty-five miles distant, and ran thus:—

"DEAR MADAM—I address you for the purpose of requesting of you a favor of great importance, which must, whether you see fit to grant it or not, remain an inviolable secret between yourself and me. After many enquiries I think I can trust you, but am afraid, that for the trifling compensation which I am able to offer you will shrink from undertaking the arduous task which I wish you to perform, which is no other than to take charge of an infant only three months old. The child's mother, to whom I was privately married, died a few days after her birth, and circumstances of the utmost moment to the child as well as myself, demand that certain persons remain ignorant of her existence. Will you consent to take her and treat her the same as if she were your own child, not only through the helpless period of infancy, the solicitous term of childhood, but even perhaps till she enters upon womanhood? Should you conclude to accede to my request, in order that suspicion may be entirely at fault, I shall convey her to your residence at midnight, deposit her on the door-steps, and immediately withdraw. You will receive my letter to-day—to-morrow I shall look for an answer, which, if favorable, I shall the evening after commence my journey in season to arrive at Greenwood Glen by twelve. I believe I might, with safety, reveal to you my real name, but as such knowledge might if by any means certain persons should receive a hint of the child's existence, place you in an unpleasant situation, I forbear to mention it. Please direct your answer to J. Smith.

With much respect, yours truly."

When Mrs. Harlowe, whose affections and sympathies were uncommonly quick and lively, thought of the forlorn situation of the motherless

infant, she could not for a moment think of refusing to receive it. She, therefore, immediately wrote an affirmative answer, which, to elude exciting the curiosity of Sanders, she concluded to carry to the post-office herself before the inhabitants were astir in the morning, and slip it into the letter-box. But the post-master was not to be deceived. He knew Mrs. Harlowe's handwriting, and was seized with a fit of uncontrollable curiosity to know what she had written to Mr. J. Smith, who he doubted not had made her an offer of his hand. "One peep was enough" to show him these words. "You see by my immediate answer I did not hesitate to comply with your request."

"Yes, and I see it too," soliloquized the post-master. "Well, I could not have thought that Mrs. Harlowe would have been so ready to accept an entire stranger." And he continued till breakfast-time to pursue this train of thought in a manner peculiarly edifying to himself. By sunset it was the current report that Mrs. Harlowe was engaged to marry Mr. J. Smith, and as this report would mask the real business negotiating, she did not take the trouble to contradict it.

As Mrs. Harlowe felt no inclination to sleep the night she expected the arrival of her charge, when the clock struck ten she laid aside the book on which she had been endeavoring unsuccessfully to fix her attention, and placed the light in a closet communicating with her sleeping apartment, lest it should attract the notice of any person who might happen to pass at a late hour. She then drew aside the curtain from a window that commanded a view of the path leading through the glen, and seated herself near it. Smiling at the restlessness that impelled her to commence her watch two hours before the time, she strove to amuse herself by forming various conjectures who Mr. Smith really was, and what could be the reasons for his wishing to conceal the existence of his child. When the midnight hour drew near she trembled with agitation and started at the rustling of every leaf. "It cannot be many minutes to twelve," thought she, leaning forward out of the open window to catch some sound of the stranger's approach. She could certainly hear the distant rattling of wheels and the hollow ringing of a horse's hoofs. The sounds became more distinct. At length through the openings of the trees she caught a glimpse of some vehicle which loomed darkly up against the midnight sky. It halted at the same spot where Mr. Smith had stopped his chaise, the same protruding limb of the apple-tree probably affording a convenient place to tie the horse. In a few moments a person entered the footpath, bearing something in his arms. Mrs. Harlowe's heart

beat audibly as he drew near the cottage. She had, in her letter, proposed for him to give three smart strokes against the door with his whip, to be repeated after an interval of about a minute, which she thought would rouse Sanders, when she could shortly afterward, as if disturbed by the same noise, appear herself. He was now near enough to assure her by his size and figure that he was the stranger she had before seen. When he perceived her at the window he faltered a little and then waved his hand. She answered in like manner, and re-assured he approached the door-steps, deposited his burden and gave the proposed signal. Mrs. Harlowe listened and thought she heard a movement in Sanders's chamber. The strokes were repeated, which thoroughly aroused him. She looked from the window—the stranger yet lingered. Heavy footsteps were now near the door, and hastily bending over the sacred deposit he darted aside and concealed himself behind a clump of rose-bushes.

"Who is there?" said Sanders in a voice so tremulous that Mrs. Harlowe who heard the question, was convinced that his imagination was filled with robbers. No answer being returned he repeated the enquiry in a more resolute tone. "You may speak or not, as you please," he then muttered to himself, "but I shall not open the door on uncertainties."

Mrs. Harlowe now made her appearance, followed closely by Amy, who had likewise been disturbed by the knocking.

"Why don't you open the door?" said Mrs. Harlowe, addressing Sanders.

"And let in a whole gang of thieves for what I know to the contrary," said he.

"There's not a soul to be seen," said Amy, who had been reconnoitering from the window.

Mrs. Harlowe, now in spite of the remonstrances of Sanders, opened the door. It was a clear, starry night, and the object on the door-step was easily discerned.

"I beg of you not to go near it," said Sanders, catching hold of her dress as she made a movement toward the basket. "I'll warrant you all manner of murderous traps and fire-works that will go off at a single touch are concealed in it."

Quietly commanding him to release her she bent over the basket, and removing a portion of light, snowy drapery, revealed the features of a sleeping infant. Exclamations of surprise simultaneously broke from the lips of Sanders and Amy.

"If this don't beat all," said Sanders. "What shall we do with it, Mrs. Harlowe?"

"Carry it into the house," she replied, "and take care of it."

"But do you consider what a nation sight of

trouble it is going to make?" rejoined he. "Why the little pig I bought yesterday of old Thrivington that won't eat a drop of milk without being sweetened will be nothing to it."

"It will not do to let the child perish from exposure," said Mrs. Harlowe, taking it into her arms, and telling Amy to bring in the basket.

On removing a neatly embroidered blanket a slip of paper was found pinned to the child's dress, containing these words.

"She was three months old the seventeenth of June. Her name is Ellen, to which the lady who takes charge of her may, if she please, add her own surname."

A small package of clothing of the finest materials and ornamented with the most delicate embroidery, had been placed in the basket at the feet of the infant. Inside the package were fifty dollars, on the envelope of which was written, "The like sum will, if possible, be remitted every six months." The sight of the money reconciled Sanders to the cries of the child, whose slumbers had been broken by removing it from the basket, and he ran to assist Amy to kindle a fire for the purpose of warming some milk. Mrs. Harlowe soon succeeding in quieting her, and it was not without a secret pleasure she found that for so young a child it was remarkably pretty. Mrs. Harlowe seemed destined to supply the town with food for gossip, and the wonder excited by the readily coined fabrication respecting her intended marriage with Mr. Smith was succeeded by this new wonder based on something more substantial.

Little Ellen like other healthy children grew rapidly in size, and in the opinion of her protectress still more rapidly in beauty. Months passed on and nothing transpired to throw the least light upon her origin.

"Do you know," said Amy, addressing Mrs. Harlowe, as she sat one evening rocking the cradle, "that it is just six months to-day since the little innocent was brought here?"

"It did not occur to me," replied her mistress.

At that moment a rap was heard against the outer door. Amy opened it, and a letter was handed her by a man who withdrew without speaking. It was directed to Mrs. Harlowe, and contained fifty dollars and these words.

"The person who confided Ellen to your care the nineteenth of last June has every reason to be satisfied with the care and attention bestowed on her. Continue that care and attention, and the blessings of a wrung and lacerated heart will be yours, and, as I hope hereafter, that which will yield you more substantial benefit."

When Ellen had attained the age of ten no

light had been shed upon the mystery which shrouded her birth. The sum of fifty dollars had been punctually remitted semi-annually, and generally in a blank envelope. The child's exceeding beauty had already procured for her the appellation of the "Rosewood Glen," and it would have been difficult to imagine a lovelier being. Mrs. Harlowe who was a well educated, judicious woman, took great pains to cultivate her moral and physical powers, well knowing it to be the best preparation for the healthful development of the intellectual. About this time she received the subjoined letter from the usual source.

"Compelled by circumstances which I cannot control, I shall in a few days embark for a foreign country, where I shall probably remain six or seven years. I have never once looked upon the face of my child since I committed her to your protection. I have just been informed that a celebrated musical corps on their way to a distant city will give a concert in the town where you reside next Thursday evening. Will you go and take Ellen with you? It will be the only chance I can have of seeing her, as I dare not, on several accounts, venture to request an interview at your house. I think I should at once recognize her, but to obviate any difficulty in that respect, let her bonnet be wreathed with some of those cinnamon roses which grow near your windows. I need give no directions relative to her education: your own good sense will be your best adviser. When my days of exile are numbered I hope to claim and acknowledge her as my own. I have thus far found you perfectly discreet. Continue to be so, as any indiscretion now would more than ever be attended with pernicious consequences. Enclosed are six hundred dollars."

Thursday evening arrived, and Mrs. Harlowe and Ellen were among the first to take their seats in the concert room. As requested in the letter, a wreath of cinnamon roses bound the hat of Ellen, beneath which her hair of a bright, sunny brown, flowed in easy curls over her neck and shoulders. Her lips, fresh and glowing as the first rose-bud of June, were slightly parted, and her eyes of that gazelle-like size and liquid lustre so famed in the oriental clime, were lit up with pleasure and the excitement of expectation as she sat regarding the brilliantly lighted orchestra.

As the court of common pleas was sitting in the village at the time, many persons, a great part of them from a distance, were drawn together, so that among those who were now fast pouring into the concert-room were several gentlemen that were entire strangers to Mrs. Harlowe. As yet, however, there had no one entered who in figure and air appeared to resemble him in whom she was most deeply interested. At length, when the music was just about to commence, and almost every seat was filled, a gen-

tleman arrived who might be a little rising of thirty, whose distinguished air marked him as one familiar with good society, and who, Mrs. Harlowe felt sure, was the father of Ellen. A fine forehead, above which clustered curls dark as the wings of night, eyes of the same hue, brilliant and deep set, a well shaped nose and firm lips, which with their haughty curve indicated an energetic and unbending will, would have rendered him conspicuous among a much larger assembly. All eyes were upon him, and the whispered words, "Who is he? Who can he be?" passed from lip to lip. None were able to answer. Even the landlord of the hotel who was a successor of the one who entertained Mr. Smith ten years before, could only tell that he was a traveller, who, when he heard there was to be a concert that evening, immediately came to the conclusion to attend. Mrs. Harlowe was more confirmed in her conjecture concerning him, when after casting round the room a keen and searching look, he placed himself where he could obtain a fair view of Ellen. After earnestly regarding her for a few moments he veiled his eyes with his hand, evidently making a strong effort to subdue some powerful emotion. That beautiful and innocent face had indeed been to him like an enchanter's wand. The mists of time rolled away from the scenes of days gone by, and one with a face as fair and scarcely less child-like in its innocence was beaming upon him. The music fell on his ear unheeded, for a sweet and thrilling voice was mingling its tones with a waterfall. The waving boughs of a greenwood tree, glimpses of the blue sky between, gleams of golden sunlight fitfully quivering on the moss and flowers beneath, were all associated with the fairy form which had been to him as a lovely morning dream. Mrs. Harlowe trembled lest his agitation should be observed, but as she possessed a clew which others knew not of, it was to them less apparent. The scene vanished, recollection of the present returned, and during the remainder of the evening he sat calm and self-possessed.

When the concert was closed he contrived to be jostled by the crowd close to the side of Mrs. Harlowe. He placed something in her hand, and then as rapidly as possible made his way toward the door. As soon as Ellen, who slept in the same chamber with her was asleep, Mrs. Harlowe opened the package given her by the stranger. It contained two miniatures. One was a faithful likeness of himself, the other that of a lady in the bloom of youth. She could hardly suppress feeling and intellectual expression belonging to an exclamation of delight as the sweet face looked up to hers, and which resembled Ellen's in every lineament. The only difference was the deep

the miniature which must ever slumber in the depths of the beaming eye and dimples of the rosy mouth, till the threshold of childhood has been passed.

These lines, written in pencil, accompanied them.

"Let no eye except yours look on these miniatures till Ellen is eighteen. If by that time you hear nothing from me let her see them, and tell her that it was thus her parents looked when they were young and happy. Teach her at the same time to lock the secret in her own bosom."

TO BE CONCLUDED.



ELLEN,

THE ROSE OF GREENWOOD GLEN.

BY CAROLINE ORNE.

Continued from page 153.

SEVEN years of the stranger's proposed absence had passed away, and Ellen, now seventeen, merited more than ever the distinctive appellation which, at an early period, had been awarded to her uncommon beauty. There were few young men of her acquaintance who would not have been proud and happy to wear this lovely rose. No one, however, was so fortunate as to win her love, and she had too much goodness of heart, and her moral perceptions were too keen and delicate to suffer her to throw round her admirers that web, which, woven by coquetry and art, and brightened by the lustre of false smiles, seems the rainbow of promise to the deceived heart. Many among her female friends wondered at her insensibility, and called her a beautiful statue, destitute of the sympathies common to her sex. Mrs. Harlowe alone knew, that beneath this apparent coldness slumbered the deep well-spring of pure and warm affections, which only waited to be stirred by a kindred spirit. Early in the spring, Edgar Herbert, a young lawyer whose health had become impaired by too close application to his professional duties, in compliance with the advice of his physician, came to reside near Greenwood Glen for the benefit of country air. Without being what would generally be termed handsome, his features were spirited and intelligent, and his manners were those of a person accustomed to polished society. He was deeply imbued with a love of whatever was beautiful, and poetic thoughts would sometimes flash upon him when toiling at the drudgery of his profession. The first time he saw Ellen she was riding in company with several of her young associates, and the ease and grace with which she managed her high-spirited horse attracted his attention before she was near enough to allow him to discern her features. These, when he could behold them, were more beautiful to him than one of his own fairy creations. Her brown hair straying from beneath the cincture of her riding-cap was bright with the gleam of the declining sunbeams, and her lips, though still, as in childhood, fresh as the opening rose-bud, were scarcely of a richer red than exercise in the open air had imparted to her cheeks. Many weeks had not passed before Herbert obtained leave to attend her in her equestrian excursions, and often, near sunset, they might have been seen riding along the banks of a beautiful stream shaded with birches, the

slant beams of the sun broken into thousands of sparkles as they touched the rippling waters, or shedding a golden glory over the woods that clothed the opposite bank.

One evening as they rode slowly along on the strip of smooth sand that bordered the river, which was so narrow as scarcely to admit of the two horses going abreast, Ellen, to whom singing was easy as breathing, warbled a little song which she had previously remarked would answer for a description of the surrounding scene.

"There," said she, with a gay laugh when she had finished, "don't you agree with me?"

"Pardon me," he replied, "for although I had a dreamy consciousness of hearing a very sweet melody, I don't remember a single word."

"Very complimentary," said she, laughing more gaily than before.

"The truth is," said he with a serious air, "I was thinking that this might be the last time that we should ever ride together."

"Why so?" she enquired, with a countenance grave as his own.

"I received a letter from my father this morning, saying that it was necessary for me to return home immediately. My health is restored, and I have no excuse for remaining idle any longer."

A silence ensued of several minutes, which was interrupted by Herbert, who after two or three attempts to glide into the subject in an easy and graceful manner, made an abrupt and honest declaration of his attachment.

"May I hope for a return, Ellen?" said he, at a loss how to construe her evident agitation.

"Before answering you," she replied, "I wish to enquire if you have been made acquainted with the mystery that hangs over my birth?"

"Mystery!" he repeated—"are you not Mrs. Harlowe's daughter?"

Ellen's negative reply was succeeded by a relation of those incidents which her protectress had thought proper to reveal to her, and which indeed embraced all she herself knew except her father's visit to the concert-room, his gift of the miniature, and his departure for a foreign land.

"As we live in a country," he replied, "where pedigree is of little importance compared with innocence and virtue, your ingenuous confession serves only to heighten my regard."

It may be unnecessary to recapitulate the particulars of the conversation which ensued, and which resulted in a mutual pledge of faith.

"Expect a letter from me by the first mail after I return," were Herbert's last words to Ellen ere he bade her adieu.

When at the close of the second day of his journey he alighted in front of the paternal dwelling—his father met him with a cordial

welcome. After the first pleasurable glow of excitement occasioned by his return had time to subside, he imagined he saw anxiety and gloom written on his father's countenance. Before retiring to rest he found that his conjecture was but too true.

The moment they were alone after supper, his father said to him—"Edgar, I am not worth a cent! Unknown to you I entered deeply into a certain speculation. It proved only a brilliant bubble, and I am a ruined man unless you will step in to my aid. Promise me that you will."

"Can you doubt," said his son, "that I will do everything to aid you that lies in my power? My health is restored, and by a close application to my professional——"

His father impatiently interrupted him.

"That will be of no use," said he. "How long think you would it take to accumulate twenty-five thousand dollars by making out writs, or now and then pleading the cause of some rascal accused of petty larceny? No, no—that won't do. A more expeditious method must be resorted to."

"I am at a loss to think of any. Speculation of all kinds is so uncertain."

"Not all," said his father, again interrupting him. "Matrimonial speculation may sometimes be excepted."

"But not always easily entered upon."

"Perfectly easy in your case. You have seen Dorothy Kenmore?"

"I have."

"Will you?"—and he grasped Edgar's hand convulsively as he spoke—"will you marry her? Quick, yes or no," seeing that Edgar hesitated—"I am not in a humor for any except a decided answer."

"No, then," replied his son.

"And to-morrow then I am without a home. Fool that I was to place confidence in the gratitude and compassion of a child."

"I am unable to imagine," said Edgar, alarmed at the extreme agitation depicted in his father's countenance, "how sacrificing myself in the manner you propose can avert the impending calamity."

"Being pressed for ready money, I mortgaged the whole of my property, worth as you well know fifty thousand dollars, to old Kenmore for half that sum. This was to be refunded at the expiration of two years or the mortgage was to be foreclosed. The day of grace expires to-morrow, but Kenmore promises to give up his claim if I can effect a marriage between you and his daughter, who, it seems, has long regarded you with a favorable eye."

"Were Miss Kenmore instead of being old and ugly and repulsive in manners, as beautiful as an

angel, I could not, in honor, comply with your wishes, as I am bound by a sacred promise to marry another."

"May I ask her name?" said his father calmly, instead of giving way to anger as his son expected.

"Ellen Harlowe."

"And resides in the town where you have been this summer?"

"She does."

"May I likewise enquire what dowry you have reason to expect with her?"

"Beauty, innocence and virtue, and a mind that scorns to deceive."

To this his father made no reply, but after sitting in a thoughtful attitude for several minutes, he said: "You must take a week to consider the matter. For that time I think I can obtain old Kenmore's lenity. Women are fickle, and it is not impossible but that this Ellen Harlowe with all her excellent qualities may voluntarily absolve you from your promise."

"When that happens," said Edgar, reddening with anger at the bare suggestion. "I am ready to marry Dorothy Kenmore."

About an hour before sunset on the day Ellen expected to hear from Edgar Herbert, the subjoined note was put into her hand by a lad living near, who said he was ordered to wait for an answer.

"The father of Edgar Herbert now addresses you for the purpose of requesting you to meet him by sunset or soon after, in some secluded spot, which you will please designate, as he has something very important to communicate. Inform no person of your intention, and fail not on any pretext to attend to the request of

JAMES HERBERT."

The contents of the note greatly agitated her, for she felt sure that to make some unpleasant disclosure or to exact some promise which had reference to Edgar, was the motive that actuated the writer. She felt half inclined to infringe the injunction of secrecy so far as to make Mrs. Harlowe her confidant that she might receive her advice, but on a second perusal of the note, she decided to abide implicitly by its directions. She accordingly in as brief terms as possible described a spot called the "Maiden's Chair," near the river, and screened by a high, precipitous bank, which, as it had the reputation of being haunted, she thought would be secure from intrusion, and where she promised to repair without delay. In fifteen minutes after she had sent her answer she was at the place she had described. It was gained by a steep descent, and besides being, as intimated, sheltered by nature and guarded by superstition, was of itself one of those lovely and

desolate spots which chill and awe the spirit. At any other time Ellen, though her superior education prevented her from giving full credence to popular belief, might not have been wholly free from apprehension, lest she should obtain a glimpse of the maiden seated on a rock that overlooked the waves which in shape bore some resemblance to a chair, and from which, it was said, she threw herself into the river on account of a perfidious lover. As it was, fear of meeting the living overcome that of seeing the dead, and agitation compelled her to sit down on one of the gray and weather-beaten rocks. Many minutes had not elapsed before she saw a man, whose appearance indicated him to be between fifty and sixty, commence descending the narrow and precipitous path. She rose, and with as much composure as she was capable of assuming, awaited his descent. The stern and ungracious resolve which had urged him to seek an interview with her had given its impress to his features.

"You are, I presume," said he, the moment he had placed his foot on level ground, "Ellen Harlowe."

Ellen assented.

"You will excuse me," said he, "but circumstances oblige me to be abrupt. Edgar Herbert, my son, informs me that you are, as the phrase goes, engaged to each other. My object in seeking this interview is to demand of you to release him from his engagement."

"Has he authorized you to demand it?" said Ellen, getting the better of her timidity by perceiving that his overbearing manner was evidently assumed for the purpose of frightening her into submission.

"It may be enough for you to know that had he been acquainted with certain incidents he would never have entered into such a foolish engagement. Restrained by mistaken notions of honor he will not ask you to release him, which you must, therefore, in his estimation, do voluntarily. If you refuse, ruin will be his—ruin, perhaps death will be mine."

Having said thus, he produced a paper to which he required her to affix her name. Hastily glancing her eye over the contents, she found that by so doing she would bind herself to request Edgar to release her from her promise without assigning any cause.

"I cannot sign a paper," said she, "that will make me appear to Edgar Herbert not only fickle but inconsistent. That would indeed make me miserable."

"Very well. His ruin and my destruction will be the consequence, for I am determined not to survive the poverty and disgrace that await us."

"I am ready to retract my promise," said she,

"if the consequences are to be so terrible, but do not, I entreat you, insist on my doing so without assigning a reason."

"I have already told you," he replied, "that unless you appear to do it voluntarily it will be of no avail."

Finding that her resolution appeared to waver, he spread the paper upon a rock, placed ink, with which he had taken care to furnish himself beside it, and put a pen into her hand.

"Quick," said he, "or it will be too dark for you to see to write."

She knelt down upon the sand and mechanically traced her name. Snatching the paper from the rock as if he feared she would attempt to obliterate it.

"You are aware," said he, "that you have bound yourself to write to my son by the next post, which must close your intercourse with him forever, for should he be so unreasonable as to request an interview you are not to grant it under any pretext whatever. Do you fully understand what is required of you?"

"I do," she replied, "and you, sir, I hope will realize that you have destroyed the happiness of an orphan forever."

"Believe me, my dear young lady," said he, taking her hand, "that I have not done so without pain to myself. Stern necessity drove me to it. I now leave you, and could you value a miserable man's blessing it should be yours."

The moment Ellen returned home as if fearful that her courage would fail her, she set about the painful task of writing to Edgar. She had just sent her letter to the post-office when the stage-coach stopped opposite the Glen. A gentleman alighted and entered the path, whom Mrs. Harlowe at once recognized as Mr. Smith, her old correspondent. She met him at the door.

"I am no longer Mr. Smith," said he, shaking her warmly by the hand, "but Henry Lester. Where is my daughter?"

Ellen was summoned, and Edgar Herbert was forgotten in the joy of beholding a parent for the first time, whose manners appeared to her more fascinating than any person's she had ever seen. After a long conversation upon what may be termed heart affairs, Mr. Lester informed them that his grandfather to whose guardianship he had been committed at the decease of his father, which happened when he was five years old, being now dead, it was no longer necessary to preserve the secret of his daughter's existence.

"Will you permit me to ask why it was necessary during his life?" said Mrs. Harlowe.

"My grandfather," he replied, "forbade my marriage with Ellen's mother, under penalty of incurring his malediction in exchange for his

large property. We were so imprudent as to disregard his threats, and were married privately. Had my wife lived it would have been impossible long to have preserved the secret of our marriage. Her early death made me determine not to forfeit the wealth which might, at some future time, be secured to her child. All my prudence, however, could not prevent him from having a vague suspicion of the truth, which caused him to curtail my liberal allowance, and prevented me from rewarding you as liberally for your trouble as I wished. I have now in addition to the inheritance derived from my grandfather, a handsome fortune which I have accumulated during my absence, which will enable me to fully remunerate you in a pecuniary point of view, although there are other and deeper obligations which I feel it will be impossible for me ever to conceal."

"The pleasure of my task," replied Mrs. Harlowe, "has ever counterbalanced its difficulties, and I can truly say that if there be any obligation it appears to me to be quite as much on my side as yours."

The next day but one Mr. Lester was obliged to leave for a distant city, where important business required his presence. He was likewise, he said, desirous of seeing a young friend residing there, whom he had met with when abroad, and whom he informed Mrs. Harlowe he would, with her leave, invite to return with him and spend a few days at Greenwood Glen. Mrs. Harlowe, of course, assented, and he departed with a promise to return in a week or ten days. Ellen, in the meantime, had received the expected letter from Edgar, who was evidently at the time he wrote laboring under great depression of spirits, though he made no allusion to the subject which had been discussed between him and his father.

Her father had been absent about a week, when one day toward evening Ellen walked out, directing her steps to the shore of the river where she and Edgar Herbert had last rode together, and where they had plighted their troth. She had promised never to see him again even if he sought an interview, which after what she had written to him it was not likely he ever would. She sat down on the green bank, and bitter tears which she sought not to restrain gushed from her eyes. A few minutes only had elapsed when she heard some one call her name. She listened. The call was repeated, and in a voice which she knew to be her father's. Hastily brushing away her tears she started up in order to go and meet him. An abrupt turn hid him from her view, and walking quickly forward she suddenly found herself within a few steps of her father and Edgar Herbert.

"May God bless you, my children," said Mr.

Lester, placing Ellen's hand in Edgar's before she was aware of his intention.

She shrunk back, but Edgar before permitting her to withdraw her hand pressed it to his lips. Mr. Lester perceived his daughter's painful agitation, and hastened to relieve it by a full explanation. Edgar, he informed her, was the young friend he became acquainted with while in a foreign land, and without knowing that he had ever seen her or Mrs. Harlowe, he mentioned them in course of conversation. The elder Herbert, who was present, when he found that Ellen was likely to prove a much richer heiress than Dorothy Kenmore, was as anxious to have the engagement renewed as he had before been to break it, and the first moment he was alone with his son frankly confessed his journey to Greenwood Glen and its result. Mr. Lester was delighted to find that his favorite young friend had become enamored of his daughter, a consummation which he had hoped to bring about when he requested Mrs. Harlowe's leave to invite him to spend a week at the cottage.

Old Kenmore, being propitiated by a handsome present in addition to the twenty-five thousand dollars, gave up the mortgage, although the day of grace had passed, while his daughter was consoled for the loss of the handsome lawyer by an offer of marriage from a good-natured old bachelor, who, if he could obtain only one, preferred an elegant establishment to a pretty wife.

Mr. Lester and the now happy lovers returned to the cottage, where the former entertained Mrs. Harlowe by a recital of the little drama in which her adopted daughter had figured as the distressed heroine.



CLARA.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

CHAPTER I.

"HID'ST thou that forehead with a golden crown,
Where should be branded, if that right were right,
The slaughter of the prince that owned the crown,
And the dire death of my poor sons and brothers;
Tell me, thou villain slave, where are my children?"

RICHARD THE THIRD.

THE sunlight of old England never broke over a richer scene than the old baronial castle, with its broad lands and hunting forests, in which Elizabeth, the widow of Edward the Fourth, had taken up her residence after leaving the sanctuary of Westminster.

The castle stood upon a hill-side. Its turrets and battlements of dark, gray stone might be seen for miles around, frowning in feudal magnificence amid picturesque mountain scenery, and with broad forests undulating an ocean of verdure, from its foundations to a quiet and beautiful valley that stretched itself to a line of blue hills which skirted the distant horizon.

A mountain stream of some magnitude washed the foundations of the castle on the north side, forming with its rocky barriers a rugged and beautiful object of scenery in times of peace. In war it answered as a moat to defend the castle, and was spanned by a swing bridge, which at the time of our story had been raised so long that the chains were rusted from disuse. For though the land was at peace, the widow of King Richard could not feel entirely safe, while the murderer of her sons usurped the throne of England.

It was a lovely morning late in the summer time. The sun, as he rose up behind the castle, shed a flood of golden light over its old, gray turrets, and rolled slowly downward across the forest below. The giant oaks seemed trembling in an atmosphere of powdered gems as the glorious sunshine broke over the dewy foliage with which they were laden. A breeze swept down from the hills and shook the gnarled old oaks, hung laughing amid the leaves, or fled away to coquette with the sedges near a lake, which lay like a gem in the forest, or to sing itself to sleep in some dingle where the wild blossoms hid themselves. The waterfall, too, rushing down the rocks and dashing against the foundations of the castle, sent forth most cheerful music. The rush and roar of its current as it sprang from rock to rock, dashing up wreaths of foam over the moss-grown battlements, might have been heard afar off—for it was a turbulent stream, deep and dangerous; but very beautiful was its

windings as it crept in and out, now in the shade, now in the sunshine, through the hunting-forest, and away down the valley.

But there was other and more stirring music in the forest than arose from breeze or waterfall: the clear, silvery notes of a hunter's bugle came winding through the leafy glades, and occasionally a deer was startled up by the sound of hoofs afar off, which snuffed the air, tossed its antlered head, and sprang away toward the hill, for amid the rocks he was sure of safety, at least from mounted huntsmen.

On the verge of the forest, and not very far from the castle, was a spot of ground from which the timber had been cut away, leaving an open space of some ten acres, where the sunshine fell refreshingly over an expanse of rich forest sward enamelled with wild blossoms.

The mountain stream, which we have spoken of, swept half around this clearing, narrowed by a deep trench cut years before, near its original bed, in order to lead off the waters which threatened to inundate the entire space if left to themselves. Grass and wild flowers had crept over the edges of this channel, fringing it to the water's brink, and giving it the appearance of a rustic ditch rather than a stream of body and depth as it really was.

The hunter's bugle sounded nearer and nearer to this open space, till at length the hunting, or as it proved to be hawking party, from whence the sounds came, emerged from the branching trees which in that direction hung completely over the stream.

The first who appeared was a lady, rather beyond the prime of life, but still of magnificent and lofty presence. In person she was large, firmly built, and limbed with perfect proportion. Though she must have been still more lovely in her youth, there was something superb in her beauty even now—a voluptuous maturity which reminded one rather of the fruit which springs from the blossom than of the blossom itself.

The rich blood warmed her cheek like a fountain of molten rubies, and her lips were like a cluster of cherries, red and fully ripe. Her riding cap of dark blue velvet was looped up from her white forehead with a string of jewels, a white plume swept from the jewelled band down to her shoulder, where it mingled with the tresses of glossy and golden hair, which, according to the fashion of the times, was allowed to fall down her back and over one shoulder—a perfect veil of wavy ringlets. A chain of heavy gold fell across her fine bust, to which was suspended a small, golden bugle with an emerald mouth-piece, and fretted with precious stones.

The lady drew up her horse, not sharply, but

with a firm curb that brought his mouth down upon his broad and snow-white chest. She looked around a moment, and lifting the bugle to her lips sounded a sweet and silvery blast, bending her head on one side with a playful motion the while, and turning her large blue eyes with sparkling impatience down a glade in the forest, as if she expected some one to obey her summons. She had scarcely turned her eyes in that direction a moment, when another lady appeared winding through the wood, who was followed by a band of retainers.

She was a young girl, not more than sixteen years of age, slender and delicate, with the same golden hair and eyes of dark azure which formed a striking beauty in the person already introduced to the reader. But the hair, though less profuse, was a shade lighter, and still more exquisitely fine in its silken texture, while it swept back from the snowy temple with a light, wavy curl, which made the sunbeams sparkle as they fell upon it—and the eyes, so large and downcast, might have owed something of their exquisite softness to the dark curling lashes that shaded them. A tinge, like the color in the heart of an almond flower, lay in her delicately rounded cheek, but even this little rosy glow was sent there by the morning breeze, for usually that cheek was of the clear, pearly white, which is so beautiful when it exists without the association of ill health—and her lips were like wet rose-buds—red and dewy—with a dimple at each corner whenever she spoke or smiled.

The Princess Elizabeth was mounted on a slender black hunter, her dress was of dark green velvet, fitted tightly to the round waist, and buttoned over the full, but delicate bust, up to the white throat by a succession of small golden clasps, each with a large diamond flashing in the centre. The skirt fell in heavy folds down the shining sides of her hunter, and from under it peeped a tiny shoe embroidered with gold, and resting lightly in the broad silver stirrup of her saddle. Her riding cap was without plumes, and twice surrounded by a finely wrought chain, which terminating in tassels of spun gold fell down and mingled with the veil of silken hair which swept over her shoulder. One little hand with its neatly embroidered glove, directed the motion of her graceful steed; on the other a falcon was perched, and confined to her delicate wrist with thongs of colored leather. As the lady rode up to the side of her mother, the bird ruffled his feathers, arched his neck and turned his flashing eyes to the soft orbs of his mistress, as if proud of such delicate thralldom, and restive to prove himself worthy by a trial of his skill.

"Now, fair girl, let us witness this boasted

leap!" said the queen dowager with a smile as the princess drew near. "See, girl, if thy slender courser can clear a ditch after this fashion."

As the royal lady ceased speaking she drew up her reins, gave them a slight shake, and patted her horse upon the neck. The well-trained animal gathered up his limbs and shot across the stream, tearing up the turf and wild flowers in gaining a foothold on the other side. It was a powerful leap, and the lady caressed him with her hand as she cast a triumphant glance across the stream.

"Come, follow—follow!" she cried, waving her hand with a proud smile.

That instant the black hunter approached the edge of the stream. A close observer might have seen that the lips of his fair rider were a shade paler than usual. But the proud and sometimes imperious queen was looking at her. She prepared herself for the leap, and, though her eyes closed tremulously for one instant, as her brave horse cleared the stream with a leap that landed him far on the opposite shore, the bird was not shaken from her wrist, and she kept her seat firmly.

"Bravely done," exclaimed the queen, riding forward, "the horse does credit to his teacher. In a year or two when he has a little more strength he may equal White Suffolk here, and he," added the lady in a tone of sadness, and smoothing down his milk white mane with her hand, "was first mounted by a king."

"My royal father?" inquired Elizabeth in a low voice.

"King Edward broke him to the bit with his own hand," replied the queen, dashing a tear from her eyes—"but this is no time for sad thoughts. Let us on to the lake! Your falcon there chafes under his jesses! Ride on—our fellows yonder are not mounted so nobly as the ladies, they must go round where the stream is narrower. Meanwhile let us on to the lake, we may strike a heron while they are finding a passage. If not they shall beat one from the rushes."

The lady waved her hand to the group of retainers on the opposite bank, and proceeded toward the lake. The princess rode by her side with a shade of sadness on her sweet face, brought there by the mention of her departed royal father. She had not learned, like her mother, how to overwhelm sorrow with excitement.

"There, those hair-brained pages have gone too far down," exclaimed the queen, with an impatient wave of her hand, intended to summon the wanderers back, but they were busy seeking for a passage across the stream and did not heed her till she lifted her hunting bugle and blew a

sharp summons, indicating with her finger the place where they might clear the stream in safety.

Scarcely had the bugle dropped from her hand, when it was answered by another blast, which came up from the forest a little to the left: a loud, clear sound, as it might be a louder echo of her own, which rang through every glade of the forest, as if perpetuated by a stout man whose breath was not easily exhausted.

The queen started in her saddle and looked at her daughter, surprised and a little angry, perhaps, for the blood grew warm in her cheek, and her eyes sparkled.

"How is this?" she said, casting a sharp glance at the body of retainers who had by this time cleared the stream and were galloping toward her with merry faces and plumes tossing to the wind.

"They are all here. The bugle notes came from none of them! Are strangers making free in our lands? Well, who is this sounding his horn so bravely under our very castle walls?" she demanded, addressing the first retainer that rode up, then adding quickly,

"We are conquered in sad sooth if noisy intruders can thus break in upon our morning sport."

"I know nothing of the matter, noble lady," said the man, evidently as much surprised as his mistress. "It may be some of the neighboring lords coming up to pay the *devoir* at the castle."

"Not with this clamor: there is no gentleman in these parts who would find courage to answer Elizabeth Woodville's bugle so saucily," replied the lady with a kindling eye. "They dare not so soon forget the homage due King Edward's widow—sound thy horn now, do not spare breath but out brave this bold marauder with a summons that shall bring him before us."

The man lifted his horn and blew a loud blast, which he prolonged almost a minute. Instantly it was answered from the forest, so loud and near that the whole group of retainers, now surrounding the queen, drew their reins tighter and turned their faces toward that part of the wood where these unusually bold sounds had issued.

The last bugle notes were yet ringing in the distance when there came a sound of hoofs, broken and mellowed by the forest sward, and directly after a party of horsemen appeared issuing from the outskirts of the wood. The whole group rode slowly forward. But though the glitter of jewels gave evidence that some of them held high rank, the queen removed near the centre of the open space, and surrounded by her retainers, sat on her horse with a lofty air waiting to receive them without advancing a step.

But the leader of the party had scarcely issued from the dim light of the forest when the blood fled from Elizabeth Woodville's face, and with a look of uncontrollable affright fearfully mingled with horror and disgust, she curbed her horse so sharply that he ran back scattering confusion among her retainers.

The princess was not so quick to recognize the personage who had so startled her mother. She only saw a man of middle size, apparently of high rank, for the trappings of his horse were heavy with gold, and his own vestments betrayed their magnificence even from the distance where she sat. She was wondering who it could be that had the power to agitate her mother thus, when the horseman rode out into the open space, and a flash of sunshine struck the jewelled star upon his breast. At that instant the breeze swept back the heavy plume of feathers that had partly shaded his face, and Elizabeth recognized King Richard the Third, her father's brother. Her face turned white, she uttered a low cry of terror, and wheeling her hunter would have fled.

But the queen had recovered from the first rush of feeling that had overwhelmed her, and though her face was still deadly pale, and her voice trembled, she besought her daughter to remain.

"Stay, Elizabeth, stay, we are powerless in his hands—do not enrage the tiger, or he may spring upon us as he has on those as dear and helpless," her voice choked her here; she bent her head a moment, and then looked around as if she too were meditating flight.

"No, no, it must be borne!" she muttered with a strong effort to recover some degree of her natural self-possession; but she could not summon the color back to her cheek, and her hand shook so violently that it was with difficulty she held the bridle, though she ordered her retainers to follow, and rode slowly forward to meet the murderer of her children.

Richard quickened his pace, as he saw this friendly movement, and the next moment was by her side. The queen lifted her hand with an unconquerable impulse to repel him, but either mistaking it for a courteous movement, or choosing so to consider it, Richard took the hand in his arm, and though it quivered like an aspen, bent forward and pressed his lips upon it.

"How fares it with our lovely sister?" he murmured, in a low, gentle voice, still holding the trembling hand in his.

He saw she could not reply; for though her lips moved, no sound came from them—and with wily self-possession, went on as if she had spoken.

"Cares of state have kept us asunder too long," he continued, "or we should have paid

homage here before. Ha, yonder sits our fair niece, the Lady Elizabeth! Shall we ride forward and pay our humble greeting?"

The Princess Elizabeth was sitting on her horse, pale, motionless, and like a chiselled statue—on the very spot where she had first seen the usurper. The reins were grasped tightly in her hand—the foot was pressed down, hard, upon the stirrup, and the wrist, upon which the hawk was perched, seemed frozen into marble. There was not a vestige of color in her face, but her eyes glittered like splintered sapphires, as she watched the meeting of her mother with that fearful man.

She saw these retainers mingle in together, smiling and exchanging civil words with each other. She saw the touch of those murderous lips to her mother's hands—she saw them wheel their horses and ride forward abreast—and knew her trial would come next.

It was too fearful! She cast a terrified look toward them, whirled her horse and fled. But she had no strength to control her steed, though he was nearing the stream every instant, and it required nerve and coolness to urge the leap over it in safety. She was upon the brink, her horse was gathering his limbs up for a leap, when the hawk lost his hold upon her wrist, and flapped his wings, vehemently, in an effort to regain it. The hunter shied, his leap was broken; but he made a spring, his front hoofs struck the opposite bank, and he fell backward into the stream.

That instant King Richard was upon the bank. He sprang from his horse, cast off his velvet cloak, and leaped into the water.

The black hunter had flung off his rider, and was swimming with loose bridle toward the shore. A mass of dark velvet, sweeping down with the current, was all that could be seen of the Lady Elizabeth. With a few vigorous strokes of his sound arm, Richard reached the spot where even this was disappearing—made a sudden plunge and came up again with the princess in his grasp. His withered arm was too feeble, either to hold the senseless maiden or buffet a passage through the water, though the bank was very near. He felt himself sinking, and shouted for help. One of his retainers stripped the bridle from his horse, flung the heavy reins to his master, and in a few moments Richard bent dripping, and almost exhausted, over the senseless young creature he had saved.

"Is she dead? is she, too, gone?" exclaimed the queen, wringing her hands in agony, over the senseless body of her child.

"Wretch!" she exclaimed, almost in frenzy, putting Richard wildly back with her hand, "could you not have spared this one—she was the last—the very last!"

There was a gleam in Richard's eye as he lifted his head and looked into the face of the unhappy woman; but it passed away, and he replied, calmly,

"The Lady Elizabeth is not dead; but for the help of this poor arm she might have been. Is it for this the queen upbraids her husband's brother?"

"Not dead! Is not this death?—you should know its signs," exclaimed the queen, kneeling down, and pressing her hand over the heart of her child. "It beats—it beats—yes, she is not dead!" and with this glad exclamation, she lifted her head and met the calm, but somewhat reproachful look, with which Richard was regarding her. She saw his dripping garments, the expression of fatigue on his face, and held forth her hand.

"You saved her—the last, the only child of King Edward. That should atone for much. His widow is not ungrateful."

"Would that she were always thus forgiving," murmured the king, pressing his lips to the hand she held forth. "But, see—our sweet niece is sensible once more, a moment and those trembling lashes will uncloze. Let us lift her from the wet sward."

As he spoke, Richard raised the maiden in his arms, and rested her pale head upon his bosom. But the thick lashes which lay quivering on her cheek, suddenly unknit their silken fringe. The eyes beneath were fixed upon his face—a flash of reason shot to them. The marble features took an expression of fear and abhorrence, and, with a wild, but faint cry, the poor girl broke from his arms and staggered to her feet.

"Do not touch me—do not—do not!" she said, holding out both hands to keep Richard from approaching her; for he had started up and would have supported her as she stood. "I will not be touched by those hands!"

The princess looked wildly around, as she uttered these phrenzied words. Her horse was standing near, dripping with water, and trembling like a disobedient hound. He had been secured by one of the servitors who was holding him by the bit. She darted forward, placed her hand on the shoulder of this man, and sprang to the saddle. The horse seemed to understand her wild desire to be alone, for as she snatched the reins, he darted away—cleared the stream with a bound, and both horse and rider were lost in the forest, before any one could stretch forth a hand to detain them.

Richard stood for a moment on the spot where he had been so unexpectedly repulsed, a frown contracted his forehead, and a bitter smile curved his lip.

withdrawn from its slipper, seemed formed only to tread the halls of a palace.

At length Clara seemed completely weary with counting the stitches in her work. She thrust her needle through a rose-bud, tossed the pile of worsted from her lap to the floor, and leaning back in her chair, languidly flung up her arms, gave a slight yawn, and sinking back in a state of delicious indolence, dropped asleep with a soft smile dimpling her mouth, and her bright chestnut ringlets falling one by one down upon her cheek and shoulder as they escaped from the back of her head, where with one twist of the hand she had fastened them while at work.

She had been asleep, perhaps fifteen minutes, when the sound of a horse dashing through the gate of the castle, and suddenly checked in the court, aroused her—"Dear me, I must have been dreaming," she said, starting up and flinging the curls back from her warm cheek with an impetuous grace that was natural to her. "Who can it be, I am sure it was a horse, and but one, passing the portal at full gallop. It cannot be my lady, they can scarcely have reached the lake yet. Well, well, I can see," and with another slight yawn Clara mounted to the seat of her chair and looked forth from the window, just in time to see her young mistress spring from her horse and enter the castle with a look of excitement and haste entirely at variance with her usual quiet and graceful movements.

Clara sprang from her chair and moved toward a door leading to the turret stair-case, when it was flung suddenly open and Elizabeth of York entered the room—her cheeks burning scarlet, her garments dripping with water, and grasping the jeweled handle of her riding whip as if it were a dagger, which some enemy had striven to wrest from her slender fingers.

"Look!" she said impetuously, lifting the whip and pointing to the window—"see if they approach together—tell me, I say, if any stranger approaches with the queen."

Clara sprang to the chair again and looked forth.

"Yes, my lady, in good sooth some one does approach," she said, "a small, slender man with ermine upon his cloak, and a jewelled collar around his neck."

"Comes he toward the castle?" said Elizabeth sharply, for anxiety had changed her voice, "Does he not turn away? keeps he with her highness yet?"

"Yes, my lady, they ride forward breast to breast, up the ascent, he bends toward her highness, and his hand rests upon the neck of White Suffolk—they are close by the portal, now!"

Elizabeth clung to the chair on which her

attendant was standing, and gasped for breath. "Look still, he may yet turn away," she said, clinging to the chair more convulsively, as Clara made a movement to leave the window, "Look, look!"

Clara bent forward and eagerly examined the party now dismounting in the court.

"A silver boar, with tusks of gold!—whose badge is that?" she murmured, agitated by wonder and anxiety for the terror of her young mistress.

"Has he entered? Is he below?" enquired Elizabeth, breathing hard, as she spoke.

"He is helping the queen from her horse—ha! I remember, now—it is Gloucester's badge!—Richard Plantagenet, what brings him here?"

With clasped hands and face pallid with affright, Clara sprang from the window and flung her arms around the princess, just in time to save her from falling to the floor.

"Sweet lady, do not tremble so—alas! it is with cold and fear both. Her garments are wet through, and her poor cheeks are white as marble—oh! she has fainted quite away, and no one near to help me!"

As she uttered these disjointed words, Clara made an effort to lift her mistress to the chair, but, light as the burden would have been to a stronger person, the poor girl had not sufficient strength to accomplish her object. So, gently allowing the insensible lady to sink to the floor, she swept together an armful of fresh rushes, which were scattered profusely over it, and pillowing the pale head of her mistress upon them, ran out to summon help.

The room was speedily filled with a troop of pages and waiting women, all overwhelmed with wonder and consternation at the state of their young mistress. She was lifted from the floor, and Clara held back the tapestry while they carried her into the adjoining room, and after taking off her wet garments, placed her on the bed.

With eager and affectionate solicitude, Clara exerted herself to restore consciousness to the pallid form, which lay like a broken flower on the couch before her. She chafed the small, cold hands; laid her own anxious face against the colorless cheek, which took a still more deathly tinge from contrast with the glowing crimson which it pressed. She ran to an elaborately carved table standing near, and searched with trembling hands among the toilet boxes and rich essence bottles for restoratives. A golden flask, filled with flower water, was all she could find; with this she bathed the forehead, the pallid lips, and even the damp tresses of the senseless lady, till life slowly returned.

It was beautiful—the sympathy which existed

between those two pure, and beautiful maidens! sympathy which would make itself felt, spite of the wide difference which fortune had placed between them. As a faint tinge of life stole over the lady's face, that of her attendant warmed to a rosier hue, and the soft, brown eyes, bent so lovingly on the royal sufferer, beamed with joy as the thick lashes, which had been lying so cold and motionless on that white cheek, became tremulous, and slowly unclosing, revealed the soft eyes beneath still whelmed in the mists of unconsciousness, like violets overlaid with night dew. A mirror of steel plate, hanging opposite the bed, in its frame of massy silver, reflected the crimson couch, the helpless form stretched upon it, and the Hebe-like creature bending over it with such anxious and tender love. Now and then, Clara would stoop down and press her soft lips to the cheek and mouth of the sufferer, with an impatient desire to impart some of the strength glowing in her own person to the feeble one. Then she would smooth back those silken tresses, bathe the white temples anew, and murmur caressing words, such as one gentle sister might whisper to the troubled heart of another.

At length that dim old mirror reflected a still more touching picture—a picture of natural love and confidence, breaking through the trammels of rank. The Lady Elizabeth moved, faintly lifted her feeble arm and drawing Clara's face down to her's, returned with a grateful kiss, the caresses that had been, timidly, lavished on herself.

"Do not leave me, Clara."

"No, lady, no. Has Clara ever left her mistress, when trouble was nigh?"

"My head is strangely bewildered—things have gone wrong with me, I fear," said the princess, passing a hand over her forehead. "Have I been very ill, that you have wet my hair so," she added, wringing the mingled perfume and water from a tress that had fallen over her bosom, and turning her eyes, with a kind of questioning helplessness, from the heap of wet garments which lay on a chair by the table, to the window, on whose richly stained surface the sunshine was warmly falling.

"Yes, sweet lady, you have, indeed, been very ill," replied Clara, tenderly.

"Oh! yes, I remember, now. It was down in the forest," murmured the lady again, pressing her forehead; then starting suddenly up, she exclaimed, "Clara, Clara, sit close to me. He is in the castle—my brothers, my poor helpless brothers were smothered in their bed! You will not leave me, Clara!"

"No, lady, I will not leave you! but do not thus give way to terror—the king is below, it is

true, and still with your royal mother: I heard his voice, but now as I lingered by the door, doubtful if I ought not to warn the queen of the sad state into which your highness had fallen. He spoke low, and there was no anger in the tones of his voice."

The princess had sunk back to her pillow again, and listened with a contracted forehead, and an expression of affright in her distended eyes. All at once she started up, caught hold of Clara's arm with both her trembling hands, and whispered,

"Did you hear that—it was his voice. Who moves in the next room?"

Before Clara could reply, the tapestry was flung back from the door, and the queen entered.

Elizabeth sat up in the bed, but still clung to her attendant and trembled violently at her mother's approach. She shrunk away with a shudder from the fair hand which was extended toward her.

"No, mother, no, his lips have kissed it!" and sinking down again, she gathered up the rich waves of velvet over her person, and turned her face away from the light.

"Leave us," said the queen, sitting down on the couch from which Clara had arisen.

She spoke in a tremulous voice, and Clara observed that her cheek had lost something of its color.

The young waiting woman left the room, but it was with reluctance, for Elizabeth had started up again, and was looking earnestly after her, as if she desired the protection of her presence, but lacked the courage to oppose the commands of her imperious mother.

"Lie down, Elizabeth, and compose yourself, before the dinner hour comes around. The king is our guest, and desires your presence!"

"The king!" repeated Elizabeth, wildly, "the king, is it, my mother, the widow of Edward—who calls Richard Plantagenet king!"

The cheek of the dowager queen turned pale, and her eyes fell.

"The nation has crowned him—he has possession of the throne," she said, with considerable effort to speak calmly. "It is useless for us to contend against his power—we may have judged him too harshly—at any rate he is a Plantagenet."

The Lady Elizabeth looked at her mother agast with terror and astonishment.

"Mother! mother!" the tone of heart-rending reproach in which these words were spoken, brought a tinge of shame back to the queen's cheek, and she turned her eyes nervously from one object to another in the room, at a loss how to proceed.

"Richard is now firmly seated on the throne, with no prince of our house to dispute his right."

"No," interrupted the princess, almost sternly, "there is no prince of our house left. My brothers—my murdered brothers, are gone, leaving me a poor, weak maiden, heiress to a kingdom which their destroyer possesses. Why comes he here? to insult us with his power. Or does he require another life?"

"Be calm, Elizabeth, do be calm! Richard comes on no hostile errand."

"Why comes he hither from any cause to rend our hearts anew with their griefs?" cried the excited girl, "his errand *must* be hostile. Listen to me, mother: he has heard of your league with the Lancaster faction, and will lay his reddened hand still more heavily upon us before he leaves these walls!"

The queen started and turned pale; but after a moment's reflection she shook her head, and a meaning smile passed over her lips.

"No, Elizabeth, he comes not in revenge: he knows nothing of Richmond's intended invasion. I repeat it, the object which brings him hither is most friendly."

A faint, incredulous smile curved the sweet lips of the princess, and she answered, with sad irony,

"Perchance he comes to surrender up the throne usurped so foully."

"Or, perchance, share it with Elizabeth, of York, the rightful heir," replied the queen, in a low, deliberate voice, and fixing her eyes on the pale face lifted to her's.

A single cry, scarcely louder than a gasp, broke from the lips of the princess, and she fell back on her couch again perfectly insensible.

The queen bent over her with a look of mingled sternness and anxiety.

"It is, perchance, as well," she muttered. "The subject once placed before her, and she will learn submission to her fate, she will see that a crown already upon the brow is worth twenty which must be contended for. It always galled my heart to reach forth a hand to raise the house of Lancaster—we must take no farther steps in the Richmond affair." Uttering these words the queen went out restless, and with an air of blended anxiety and exultation. She passed by Clara, in the next room, and ordering her sharply to go in and attend to the princess, joined Richard, who was still waiting in her cabinet below.

When the queen entered her cabinet, she found Richard pacing slowly to and fro in that small apartment. He had flung off his cloak and cap, and though his ride through the forest had shaken the water from his garments, they were still wet and disordered. His face bore an anxious expression, the thin lips were compressed with more

than usual firmness, and his cold, gray eyes were bent upon the floor. He paused in his walk as the queen entered, cast a keen glance on her face, and waited, as if expecting her to speak. But she was in no haste to open the conversation, and after a moment he said, with a well suppressed impatience.

"Well, madam, well!"

"The Lady Elizabeth is ill. I found her in bed, and suffering much from her fall," said the queen, passing a hand across her forehead.

"But she was not insensible, she could understand that which you wanted to say, madam," rejoined the king, quickly.

"Yes, she did understand, at last," replied the lady, leaning her forehead down upon her hand, while she bent her eyes to the floor, overpowered by the sharp glance fixed upon them.

"And what was her reply? is she in anyway inclined to our suit?"

"The mere mention of it drove her insensible. She lay upon her couch like a dead thing when I came away," replied the queen.

Richard stood still, his lips were closed hard together, and a frown gathered upon his forehead, till his somewhat straight brows almost met, and formed a line over the keen eyes, which still remained clear and cold underneath. He took the heavy ring from his thumb and thrust it sternly back again, two or three times, though apparently quite unconscious of the act, and then began to pace the room once more in silence, now and then casting a severe glance on the queen, who sat pale and distressed in her chair.

"It seems we have but chosen a lukewarm advocate for a proposal, which affects both the welfare of England, and the dearest wishes of its monarch," he said, at length, in a stern and freezing voice. "But, perhaps, means may be found to quicken your own interest in this matter, fair madam." With these words Richard drew a chair to a table near which the queen was sitting, and placed himself directly before her. The lady made a strong effort to collect her energies for the unpleasant conversation which she felt to be inevitable.

"You broke the subject to Elizabeth—what objections did she make?" inquired Richard.

"None in words, she was quite too feeble for that—but how can a creature so fond and gentle think of uniting herself to the mur—the destroyer of her brothers—to the possessor of a throne which, after their death, belonged to her by inheritance?"

The queen trembled at her own temerity, as she uttered these words, and her cheek was white almost as the ostrich plume that swept over it. She expected a fierce and savage burst of indig-

nation from the monarch, whom she had thus found courage to brave, but no sound of anger followed her words, and when she lifted her eyes to his face, it was perfectly calm and immovable in every feature:

"You mistake, madam," said he, very mildly, "you mistake—Richard Plantagenet is neither the murderer of your sons, nor the usurper of your daughter's throne. The boys are alive."

"Alive! blessed saints, alive!" exclaimed the queen, starting to her feet with clasped hands, and a look of eager joy kindling up the rare beauty of her face; but in an instant she sank to her chair again, paler than before, and breathing with difficulty.

"If I could believe it—if I could but believe it," she said, lifting her clasped hands towards Richard, while tears gushed down her cheek—"Oh, my God, if this was only true!"

"The boys," said Richard, still fastening his eyes calmly on her face, "are safe and well as you are. They have been sent to foreign parts—the peace of the realm required it."

"Where, oh, where, tell me that I may go to them, though they be exiled to the ends of the earth!" exclaimed the poor queen, passionately.

"No, lady, their place of retreat must not be known—let it suffice that they are safe and content. To England they are dead, murdered—if our enemies will believe it so—still it is but humanity to undeceive the mother who mourns their loss. We would give the woman who believed herself the royal Edward's wife no unnecessary pain."

"The woman who believed herself Edward's wife?" repeated the queen, looking up with painful amazement on her face. "Who *believed* herself Edward's wife?"

"Lady, it is time that you should be undeceived in all things. We came not here, as you may suppose, to seek alliance with the heiress of our brother, and thus confirm, beyond dispute, our own true right to the crown we wear. It is from love and, perchance, some touch of pity to the sweet lady herself, that our suit is urged. Edward left no heir—if he had, it would not have been a child of Elizabeth Woodville. For the Lady Eleanor Talbot, his true and lawful wife, was alive long after the birth of your own children."

Elizabeth struggled to speak, but had only power to move her white lips, and motion an indignant denial with her hand.

"This was known to us previous to Edward's death," resumed Richard, calmly as before. "The duchess, our noble mother, was informed of it at the time. Edward, himself, confessed the previous marriage in our presence, before the

bishop, who had performed the ceremony. Nay, it was said that Elizabeth Woodville, herself, was not altogether unawares of the tie which bound her royal wooer to another!"

"It was false—it was false!" broke from the pale lips of the queen, but her eyes quailed beneath the searching glance which Richard never removed from her face.

A cold, incredulous smile passed over the king's lips.

"It matters little whether you were ignorant or not. Our mother satisfied herself of this truth, and, were it needful, could easily prove it to the people."

The queen sank back in her chair, and covered her eyes with her hand.

"At present, these proofs rest with our house. If the Lady Elizabeth affects our suit and mounts the throne of England as the bride of Richard—there, let the record of our brother's weakness perish!" continued the king.

"And if she refuse!" said the queen, faintly.

"She will not refuse, her mother will prevent that!" replied Richard, quietly smoothing down the damp ermine which faced the sleeve of his surcoat with his white and beautifully formed hand, "she will not rashly deprive herself of the respect and honor rendered by the people to a dowager queen; or of that greater honor which will attend the mother of a reigning queen. Yes, yes, believe us, the Lady Elizabeth will consent, even though her fair hand has been somewhat temptingly offered to that Lancaster Richmond, as a bribe to rebellion!"

Calmly, nay, almost jeeringly as these last words were spoken, they produced a powerful effect on the queen. The hand fell suddenly from her eyes, her face turned deathly white, and a faint cry burst from her lips while she sat gazing upon the composed, and even smiling face, bent toward her with a sort of wild fascination.

"Your ambition would not be gratified in that quarter, be assured," continued Richard, after a moments quiet enjoyment of her agitation. "The blood of York can never mingle freely with that of Lancaster, though, lawfully or unlawfully, it has, now and then, taken in a muddy stream from the town nobility."

The slight sneer which accompanied these insulting words, brought the hot blood into Elizabeth Woodville's cheek, an indignant reply sprang to her lips, but, though power had made her haughty, and hatred of the man before her, urged her on to recrimination, she was too much terrified by the knowledge he had obtained of her understanding with the Lancaster party, for any expression of anger, save the tears that broke passionately down her burning cheeks.

"Besides," continued Richard, taking the lady's hand, and pressing his scornful lips upon it. "When Richmond is informed that the Lady Elizabeth is not an heiress of York, he may not be less willing to cumber even his fancied claims to the throne, with the left hand daughter of a rival house."

"Your highness dared not insult me thus while Edward lived," cried the queen, withdrawing her hand, indignantly, and rising from her chair.

"No!" replied Richard, rising also, and speaking in a slow stern voice, "the Duke of Gloucester smiled at your folly then, as the king smiles at your weak attempts at treason now. But have a care, proud dame, have a care, as Richard is a crowned monarch, either the Lady Elizabeth's hand or her mother's head shall be his before another three months comes round."

The Queen sunk to her chair again, clasped her hands on the table, and her face fell forward upon them, while her breath rose thick and painfully.

Richard folded his arms and paced the room. All the angry and bitter feelings which he had curbed till then, broke loose in his features. A dark cloud was upon his forehead—his eyes gleamed, and the corners of his mouth were drawn down, till even his somewhat prominent and dimpled chin took a pointed and fierce expression. He paused in his walk, and with his arms still folded, stood for a moment gazing sternly on the lady.

"Well, fair dame, which shall it be, the daughter's hand, or the mother's head?"

The queen shuddered, and without lifting her face muttered in a painful and husky voice,

"If the power rests with me, Elizabeth shall be your wife!"

Richard turned away and began to pace the room again, muttering to his own heart, "I scarce know which to take the love or hate."

But the queen had lifted her face, and he felt that she was gazing upon him, so, with a strong mastery over passions, which nothing but a will of iron could curb, he forced the frown from his brow and sat down again.

"Now let us be friends, indeed, fair sister, or fair mother, as it must soon be. This union shall revive more than the pomp and power which was yours during the life-time of our royal brother, and next to the sweet bride you promise the scarcely less lovely mother shall be taken to Richard's heart."

There was something frank and cordial in this speech which, notwithstanding her distrust, had its effect upon the ambitious woman to whom it was addressed. Thoughts of former power kindled her eye, and something, which was al-

most a smile, came over her face as she felt her hand clasped in his.

"Remember," said Richard, smiling, as if quite assured of her sincerity, "there must be no more tampering with Richmond."

The lady's eyes fell, and the color mounted to her cheek again.

"You can trust me; our interest runs together," she said, with evident sincerity. "But how will the question of consanguinity be overcome?"

"The pope has by this time granted a dispensation," was the reply, "dispose the lady Elizabeth in our favor by your own gentle eloquence, or even authority, and all obstacles are removed."

"But my children, my sweet boys, if they are indeed alive, you have the power to place them in my arms again. Do this, and Elizabeth Woodville will serve your highness as a slave."

All the mother broke over the queen's face as she spoke. Richard was touched, for he had been a father, and memory, for a moment, was strong within him.

"Serve our interests faithfully, with the lady of our love and all this may yet be. Richard will hereafter make it his study to repay in kind the happiness he shall receive at your fair hands, noble dame."

"Give me my children! give but a hope of seeing them again, let the day be ever so distant and I am your slave!"

"The hope—nay, the certainty is yours! Remain true, and Richard will be grateful in all things."

"I will! I will! so help me all the saints in heaven! I will be true;" cried the lady, trembling with overwrought emotions, "my daughter is yours, and you shall some day hereafter give back to my heart the children—the two dear sweet boys that I have mourned as dead. Pass by all honors, every thing else, this is our compact, Richard Plantagenet—this is our compact!"

This enthusiasm—this firm determination, was what Richard had wished to inspire. He felt sure of her now, and answered, with warm and earnest courtesy.

"It is our compact, fair sister—a holy and wise one. Let us seal it here, and now." And taking a costly ring from his little finger, Richard placed it on her hand, which trembled with eager and wild hope as it received the token.

"Now we are firmly united in one cause," said Richard, pressing her hand to his lips. "Once more you belong, heart and soul, to the House of York."

"I do, in all truth, heart and soul; the blessed Virgin so smile upon me as I keep the pledge."

And pressing the ring to her quivering lips, the Royal widow put back the velvet curtain

which concealed a little oratory opening from her cabinet, and as the rich fabric swept back to its place, flung herself on a hassock before the crucifix and burst into tears, tears that sprang from no pious or devout feelings; for such sensations were almost unknown to the ambitious and beautiful woman. But all the strong feelings of her nature had been aroused by the influence of a mind which knew how to excite and regulate hers, and in the reaction of her overwrought feelings she sought the privacy of her oratory.

After a little time, she came out again, more composed, but still with flushed eyes. Richard was still in the cabinet, waiting to take his leave before going to the rooms that had been hastily prepared for his reception. A few courteous words were exchanged between them, and they separated, to meet again at the noon-day meal.

When Elizabeth Woodville was left alone she sat down, and leaning her arm upon the table, remained for some minutes lost in a tumult of thought. What was she to do? How could she act?—already was she pledged to the Lancaster faction—her daughter's hand had been solemnly promised to Richmond, the leader of that family—her son, the Marquis of Dorset was absent even then, privately collecting vassals from the various estates over which she held supremacy, in order to facilitate the invasion and sustain the pretensions of the Lancasterian prince, whose arrival in England might be expected every day.

But the last hour had worked a total revolution in her mind. The way had been opened by which her daughter might mount the throne, not as a sort of necessary appendage to a prince whose title was so defective that it became policy to strengthen it by a union with the house of his enemy, but as the bride of a reigning monarch, the most crafty statesman and best general of the age. Her feelings, as the widow of a Plantagenet, had always revolted at the idea of seeing a deadly enemy of that house mount the throne of her husband, and now, that a more direct and certain channel to her daughter's, and consequently, her own advancement was opened, she resolved at all hazards to remain firm to the compact she had just made with King Richard—other and more womanly reasons urged her on to this decision, Richard had assured her that her children were yet alive, and she believed him, for with all his ambition and stern faults, the King was not a man to conceal any act of his own by a positive falsehood. The wrongs which he committed were boldly maintained. He was far too brave, and too strongly entrenched in the kingly prerogative to shrink from acknowledging any deed which state policy rendered necessary, or even expedient.

When Elizabeth Woodville thought of these things her heart beat high with wild ambition and sweet maternal hope. Her daughter would be queen, her sons would be restored to her. The story of Edward's previous marriage must be crushed, true or false, by the proposed union. All these advantages seemed but cheaply purchased by the forfeit of her pledged word to Richmond, and the sacrifice of some natural scruples regarding the near relationship of the King and her daughter. But the Pope had power to grant a dispensation, and above all, Richard, by some means, had been made acquainted with her treasonable practices with the other party, and she well knew that her only hope of forgiveness for this treachery lay in a firm adherence to his interests. With all these strong motives for a change of policy, urging themselves on the heart, the widow left her cabinet and sought the apartments of her daughter.

She found Clara seated in the dim light of her lady's chamber, holding back a portion of the curtains with her hand and watching her mistress as she slept. The young girl moved respectfully away as the Queen approached, and was about to leave the room—but the lady detained her with a motion of the hand as she softly drew back the curtains and looked in upon the recumbent figure of her child, who lay sleeping in their rich shadow. There was an expression of trouble on that sweet and delicate face, as if painful thoughts haunted the heart, even in its repose: the cheeks were still colorless, and the long golden lashes that lay upon them were heavy with tears, which seemed to have forced their way from beneath the closed eyelids. One little hand that had crept out from its richly laced sleeve, held a fold or two of the velvet bed drapey crushed together in its slender fingers, the other was thrust beneath her pale cheek and the pillow, and half buried in the mass of bright ringlets which fell around her like a veil.

"She sleeps soundly," muttered the queen, laying her hand on the white temple that glowed like snow through the golden light of those tresses.

"Come to me when she awakes, good Clara," she added, in a whisper, to the attendant, "nay, even arouse her if this slumber continues too long, and see that she is arrayed in her most becoming apparel. The king dines here to-day, and your lady must find strength to grace the board with her beauty."

"I much fear the princess will not be able—"

"She must—she must—" cried the queen, interrupting Clara, "come to me when she wakes, I will give her good reasons why she should be strong and happy."

With these words the queen dropped the curtains over her child, and went out still restless with excitement.

Clara resumed her place by the couch, with a sad and melancholy air which seemed but little at home on that young face. Tears gathered in her eyes, and shaking her head, she murmured, "Alas, alas," several times, and then sank into mournful silence again.

TO BE CONTINUED.

"He told me they were alive, and I believe him," she said with great feeling, "but does not this joyful news deserve more courtesy than we are rendering the kind uncle who has come himself to gladden us with it?"

"It does—it does," exclaimed the princess, reaching forth her trembling hand toward the velvet robe which hung over Clara's arm, "make haste, good Clara, and smooth these ringlets—my uncle Richard, I can call him uncle now, madam," she added, turning to her mother with a sweet smile, "my uncle Richard shall not find me the least grateful of our family."

The queen was far too well read in the human heart to chill this gush of joyful feelings by any allusion to the reward which the king expected for the good news he had brought, she kissed her daughter again and went out making a sign for Clara to follow her.

"You have been faithful and kind to your young mistress," she said, pausing near the window where Clara's embroidery frame stood, and attempting to relieve the embarrassment which evidently oppressed her by trifling with the pile of glowing worsted that lay on a corner of the frame. "She loves you well, and doubtless now and then exposes some of her heart's feelings to your observation."

The queen fixed her eyes steadily on the young girl as if to read her thoughts more thoroughly,

CLARA.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

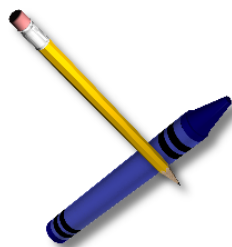
CHAPTER III.

MADAM, so thrive I in my enterprise
And dangerous success of bloody wars,
As I intend more good to you and yours
Than ever you and yours by me were harm'd."

RICHARD THE THIRD.

WHEN Clara returned to the apartment of her mistress laden with the sumptuous garments which she had been commanded to bring from the wardrobe, she found the princess standing in the midst of the floor in a state of excitement such as had never shook her delicate frame before. Her eyes sparkled, her cheek was warm with crimson, and her small feet trembled as they pressed the oaken floor.

"They are alive! they are alive, Clara," she cried eagerly as her attendant entered—"my brothers, my sweet, sweet brothers, we shall see them again, was it not so, madam? I am confused, wild, dizzy, but your highness told me this—it is no dream." The queen smiled, and tears stood in her eyes as she flung her arm around the trembling form of her daughter.



but Clara only bent her head and stood in the attitude of a respectful listener.

"There was a time," continued the queen, attempting to assume a confidential tone—"there was a time when our family interest seemed linked with that of the young Lancastrian Prince, but this news of our children, the presence of the king, has wrought a change in the destiny of your young mistress—she will be queen, but not to Henry of Lancaster. Can I depend on you, Clara—will you aid in reconciling her to the change?"

The blood fled from Clara's cheek, and she trembled where she stood.

"Your highness would give her to Richard Plantagenet," she said in a low voice.

"You have much influence with her, exert it to this end," replied Elizabeth Woodville persuasively, "and your own fortune rises with that of your young mistress." Clara bent her eyes to the floor and remained silent—the queen marked her reluctance and bit her lip impatiently.

"You make no reply, maiden," she said sharply.

"Forgive me your highness," said the young girl, looking up with her large, earnest eyes, "I am confused, astonished, and know not how to speak, but believe me—for it is the simple truth—I have no such influence with the princess as your highness' words seem to imply."

"Listen, maiden," resumed the queen, drawing farther back into the recess as if to avoid listeners, though none were in the room. "The welfare, nay, the life itself of your benefactress is at stake in this matter—you can do more than any other person with the princess, she *must* become the bride of Richard. If she becomes so through your persuasion there is no boon which you may not claim as the reward."

Clara started, looked suddenly up, and the red flashed into her cheek again—a meaning smile curved the lip of the queen as she noted the change, and in a voice which conveyed deeper meaning than her words, she went on.

"We speak not at random in saying this, and perhaps even guess what is passing in that young heart without gainsaying what we have already promised. The king has power to grant nobility when that is wanting, even our own son was but a simple gentleman before King Edward made him what he is—and Elizabeth Woodville was but a simple gentlewoman—do you understand, maiden?"

"I think, yes. I believe that I do understand your highness," replied Clara in a faltering voice, while her whole frame shook, and her face burned with blushes.

"It is enough," replied the queen. "When

Elizabeth of York is Queen of England, that which her waiting maiden has scarcely dared to dream of shall be accomplished—let this be a gage between us."

And taking a ring from her finger, the queen laid it on the embroidery frame and went out, leaving Clara overwhelmed and dizzy with conflicting emotions. She stood several moments with her hands clasped and lost—not in thought, her brain was too unsteady for that, but with a thrill of wild hope at her heart which had never found its way there before. At length she drew a deep breath, and taking up the ring sat down in the chair, and covering her face with both hands wept, not tears of joy or sorrow, but of overwrought feelings so tumultuous that they partook of no definite character. The silvery tinkle of a bell summoned her to the Lady Elizabeth's chamber, she went in with flushed cheeks and tears still sparkling on her eyelashes. The princess was so completely engrossed by her own thoughts that this strange excitement in her attendant passed unnoticed, and the business of her toilet went on with feverish haste, and when she was fully arrayed, when the light of jewels and the glow of heavy velvet sent brightness to her pale beauty, she went forth leaning on the arm of her waiting maiden with a light step and a heart full of gratitude to the man whom she had shrunk from in terror and disgust but an hour before. In the tumult of her feelings she had forgotten those words of the queen which had flung her fainting upon her pillow.

The banquetting room of the castle was cast open, and the noonday meal spread with the magnificence befitting a dowager Queen of England. Retainers in royal livery stood ready to serve the profuse viands that loaded down the board. Rich plate of gold and silver emblazoned with the royal arms, flashed up from amid huge rounds of beef, haunches of venison, and such substantial fare as in that age of substantial cookery, loaded the tables of the highest with almost coarse profusion.

A door at the upper end of the room was at length flung open, and King Richard appeared with his royal sister-in-law leaning on his arm. With all his love of sumptuous apparel, few men knew how to blend the refined and the magnificent together so completely as Richard the Third. His taste for display has been the theme alike of praise and censure among historians. His exquisite taste and the artistical effect which it always produced in his own dress and equipage might have arisen from the morbid sensitiveness to which a slight, very slight defect in his form had given strength. This, like all his characteristics, has been exaggerated into a deformity

by the genius of a man whose poetry has found a thousand tongues where the true historian has, to this day, hardly found a hearing from the multitude. A slight fall of one shoulder, which the early use of arms and the weight of heavy armor almost constantly worn from his youth up, had pressed out of perfect symmetry with the other, would scarcely have passed as a defect in any family less remarkable for great personal beauty than that of York. But with Richard who had spent his life in the court of a brother whose magnificent person was the theme of all tongues, this irregularity of person, slight as it was, probably impressed his mind more forcibly and turned his attention to the advantages of masculine beauty with a power which no extraordinary attractions would have imparted to a mind so strong and vigorous as his. Be this as it may, nothing could have surpassed the richness of his apparel or the cold grace of his manner as he entered the banquetting room with that beautiful woman by his side. His head was uncovered, and the thick tresses of his hair were glossy with the perfumed waters that had been lavished over them, and brushed dry again by the careful hand of his valet. A surcoat of rich purple velvet was slashed at the shoulders and flung open from the chest, sufficiently to reveal the spotless ermine with which it was lined, and beneath that an underdress composed of light gold lace, seamed together with a heading of seed pearls, which was revealed in rich glimpses through every opening in the glowing velvet or the snow-white fur, and which terminated in a glittering collar around the neck. A single wave of the purest linen was passed around the lower portion of his throat—a jewelled collar studded with diamonds, rubies, and huge emeralds fell over his bosom, and rings of the purest water flashed on his white and finely shaped hands, which were rendered still more delicate by an edging of exquisite point lace that fell from beneath the glittering undersleeve, and the heavy, open sleeve falling over that with a mist-like softness which was exceedingly beautiful in its effect. His nether garments were of snow-white velvet slashed with the same spotless color, corded with a faint purple, and every opening loosely clasped with jewels. His slippers were of purple, frosted with seed pearls, and fastened at the instep, each by a tiny white rose with a diamond flashing like a drop of dew in its bosom. At that time Richard was scarcely thirty-four years of age. Though deeply marked from thoughts and passions early developed in his character, there was something kingly and noble in the stern and cold gravity of his countenance. His hair possessed more than the brilliancy of first youth—and there was the

changeable power in his grey eyes which strong passions, even smothered ones, must always impart. As he stood thus sumptuously arrayed at the head of the banquetting room, Elizabeth of York appeared at another door, leaning on the arm of her attendant, Clara. A smile, one of those flashes of light which are so startlingly beautiful on the features of a man who seldom smiles, flashed over Richard's face. He advanced a step or two, and when the young girl came toward him with a brightening face and eyes full of grateful joy, he took her hand and kissed it with a degree of warmth that brought the blood warmly to its white surface. As he turned to lead her toward the table his eye fell on Clara, who had drawn back and stood near the door. The glance which he fixed on her was so keen, so full of unpleasant surprise that the maiden felt her eyes droop, and her cheek burn beneath his scrutiny; she saw him turn toward the queen while his eyes were still turned upon her, and ask some questions, and though the queen answered in a low voice, her words reached her where she stood.

"I can scarcely inform your grace—she is the daughter of a woman whom the late king brought into our household. I have never inquired what part of England gave her birth."

These were the words that reached Clara's ear. Richard turned again to look on her after he was seated at the table—"It is a strange likeness," he muttered as Clara bent her face till the chestnut curls which fell in long, natural ringlets down her back, veiled the flush on her cheek. "The lip, the dimpled cheek, the large blue eye, all are his"—but Elizabeth of York bent her fair head and addressed a few words to the monarch as these thoughts passed through his mind—and those sweet tones had a power to sweep all other objects from his mind. After that he seemed entirely engrossed by the pleasure of having her by his side.

They were still at the banquet when a sound of horses coming into the court, and footsteps hastily advancing toward the room where they sat made the queen start and fix her eyes almost wildly on the door. Richard was so completely occupied with the princess that he did not observe the noise till the door was flung open, and a young man some four-and-twenty years of age entered the banquetting hall. Richard looked suddenly up and smiled, one of those calm, sarcastic smiles which was more natural to his lips than the softened expression they had worn a moment before, curved his mouth. The young man started and turned white, then red with conflicting feelings as he felt the influence of those cold, mocking eyes—but he recovered himself instantly. He

met Richard's glance almost haughtily, his dark eyes flashed with courageous light, and with a firm step he advanced up the hall: though his velvet dress was dim with dust, and his hair disordered, he made no apology for this disarray, but after slightly bending his head as he passed the king, went up to his mother and requested to speak with her alone the moment she could leave the banquetting hall. His words were uttered in a low voice, and intended for her ear only, but the faint expression that stole over Richard's face was sufficient proof that they had reached him also. He made no observation, however, but received with graceful but cold dignity the apologies for his abrupt appearance before his mother's guests in such unseemly guise, which Dorset now saw the policy of offering.

When Dorset had left the room to arrange his toilet, the king bent slightly toward the queen as he sat down the golden goblet from which he had been drinking, and without lifting his eyes to her face which had become suddenly pale, said in a low, icy voice,

"Give him the interview, fair dame. We have no fear of treachery from you."

"Nor from him, I trust," replied the queen in a faltering voice.

"No," said the monarch, with another cold smile, "nor from him," and once more he bent blandly toward the princess, and now there was love light in those eyes, and his voice was soft and honied as the breath of a flower.

The moment King Richard left the banquetting room the queen hastened to her closet, where she found the Marquis of Dorset walking up and down with an agitated step.

"Mother what is this?—how comes this man hither?" he said, pausing in his walk, and turning quickly as the queen entered, "everything is in readiness—all your desires have been obeyed—our partisans are up, ready at any moment to march for the camp of Richmond."

The queen sunk to a chair and turned deadly pale.

"The camp of Richmond!" she exclaimed in a quick, startled voice, "what—where is the earl?"

"Safe in England, fair mother—in England. But how is this—are my tidings to be received with white lips and angry eyes? Why is it that I find Richard Plantagenet within these walls?"

The queen drew her hand across her forehead and remained silent as if completely at a loss for words to express her thoughts. At length she met the eyes of her son fixed inquiringly on her face, and turned it away to avoid a scrutiny she could not well endure.

"You did not receive my message then?" she said.

"What message?—no, I received none. What message, I pray you, good mother?"

"I sent a courier to request you to proceed no further in this matter. We can no longer aid the plans of this Lancasterian Prince."

"Mother!" There was a world of reproach conveyed in this little word, and the queen felt it thrill through her whole frame, but she was too imperious in her will for any feelings of self-reproach to influence her, and conquered the shame beaming in her cheek and weighing down her eyelids, with a firm effort at self-control. She felt the necessity of a full and decided explanation with her son, and conquering all repugnance to an acknowledgment of her treachery, coldly announced and defended it. While she explained her position regarding Richard in a hurried and brief manner, he stood before her with one hand pressed hard upon the table, and quivering in every joint with burning indignation. When she had done he clenched his hand, pressed it fiercely down on the table, and while his lips trembled and his eyes flashed fire, looked sternly in her face.

"And these evil thoughts—this rank treachery has found a place in the heart of my mother—of a woman who has once been a crowned queen. By every saint in heaven I will hold no part in conduct so base. What, wed my sweet half sister to her father's brother!—madam, what evil spirit have you been communing with of late?"

The queen checked her burning resentment and answered him calmly, and with some attempt at the blandishment which had won her the heart of Edward, she dwelt upon the advantages of a union with the reigning monarch, of the peace which it was certain to secure to the country. She spoke of the power it would give herself and her family, and held forth hopes of the highest honors if Dorset would consent to abandon the enterprise to which she had but a short time before urged him with more reason and equal eloquence, but promises, sophistry, and even tears were ineffectual. Dorset listened to all she urged with indignant impatience, and as soon as she had finished walked sternly toward the door.

"Madam, you have an undoubted right to forfeit a given pledge if it seems good to you. But I am more chary of my honor, and shall, therefore, depart for Richmond's camp by daylight in the morning with all the forces I have collected."

As the young man spoke his hand was upon the latch, and he opened the door as if determined to end the interview at once.

"One word more," said the queen, wrought to a painful state of anxiety by his firmness. "Will nothing win you from this enterprise?—honors, riches, command you have already rejected—is

there no other gift within my power? Bethink thyself, Dorset, is there no other wish that a mother's hand might accomplish?"

The queen smiled archly as she spoke, and moving forward laid her hand on the young man's arm. The hot blood rushed over his face, for there was something in the queen's manner more than in her words to embarrass him, but he soon resumed the composure which had left him but for a moment.

"You have perhaps guessed rightly, madam," he said with quiet coldness, "I deny not the love which I feel for the good and beautiful creature you hint at. But even your consent to our union I would not purchase at the expense of honor—she is too gentle, too pure, I could not attain her, humble as she is, at that price if she knew the sacrifice."

"Dorset, Dorset, why urge me so far?—I tell you the king knows all—his vengeance will be quick and terrible," cried the queen.

"The more reason that I should leave a roof polluted by the tyrant," exclaimed the young man resolutely. "The more reason that we take to the field at once—farewell, madam, I shall to horse forthwith, and when we meet again let me hope these wicked plans will have left your head forever."

Dorset flung open the door as he uttered these words, and went out without any of the usual ceremonies which had never been omitted when taking leave of his mother before.

The queen flung herself in a chair again, and shrouding her face with one hand, sat for a few moments lost in thought, she then started up and hurried to the apartment to which Richard had withdrawn after dinner, and where he was still sitting with the Lady Elizabeth by his side. He looked up as the queen entered, perused her face for an instant, and then arising went to the door and gave some directions to one of his attendants in the next room. He resumed his seat again and his discourse with the princess, when the door was flung open and the Marquis of Dorset entered, followed by two of the gentlemen who had accompanied Richard from London.

The young nobleman was in a state of intense excitement, he trembled violently, and for the first time that day his fine face was colorless and agitated. He walked directly up before the king and addressed him without the slightest show of ceremony or respect.

"Will your highness inform me why it is that your people presume to stop my full egress from this, my mother's castle?" he demanded with rash haughtiness.

"Our court has been so little graced by the Marquis of Dorset of late that we have sent to

desire his company for a short space in London. He will find pleasure in honoring us no doubt."

These words were uttered with the cool and quiet dignity of a superior extending an invitation to one of rank beneath him, and with a slight bend of the head he turned to the queen and began conversing with her as if nothing had transpired to interrupt the tranquillity of his position. After a few moments he arose and walked slowly down the room, as he passed the marquis he smiled blandly, and observing,

"We start in an hour, my Lord Marquis: pray suffer our people to order your horses," he moved on.

Dorset understood full well that he was in reality under arrest, and that any hopes of escaping from the thralldom thus blandly imposed on him was apparent submission. He bowed, therefore, but still with some haughtiness, and walking up the room stood with folded arms gazing moodily on the floor.

Meantime Richard had taken a turn or two in the room, and at length paused by a window, near which the queen had taken her seat.

"Your highness cannot mean to imprison him," she said, lifting her anxious face to the monarch as he drew near.

"No, no—but we must not allow him to join the rebels," replied Richard in a low voice, "he is quite too good a soldier, too honorable as a knight for that—a few weeks restraint in London will keep him out of harm's way. This arrest means nothing further than is necessary to his own safety, rest content with that, fair dame."

Clara was standing near the window, and as the queen replied in a louder tone she caught enough of the conversation that followed to excite the deepest interest in her mind. Some words had been spoken which she did not hear, when the queen replied as if in answer to them.

"But what commander can be chosen?" she said.

"Lord Stanley," repeated Richard.

"Lord Stanley," repeated the lady, "he is the father-in-law of Richard."

"And Richard Plantagenet is the keeper of his son George—a single wavering act and his boy's head pays the forfeit."

"But the troops are gathered by Dorset without his command, they may not readily fall in under Stanley's banner."

"Dorset has but acted as the agent of his mother. Let her write and direct Stanley to assume command of the troops."

Clara heard no more, for that instant Dorset had given her a signal to approach the part of the room where he stood. He had taken up a book, and seemed to be deeply engrossed by its

pages, but as she drew near he gave her a significant look, and placing the volume on a table sauntered away.

Clara drew the book toward her, removed a slip of paper from its leaves, and stealing back to her former position in the recess of a window, began to read it though with great trepidation.

"If my mother sends any messengers from the castle learn their errands, and act as you think wisest for us all. My sister must not be sacrificed—the great cause must prosper—be sharp-sighted and for my sake act bravely when the time for action arrives. Once more do not let my mother hold any communication with the troops I have been gathering."

Clara tore the paper into a hundred tiny pieces, and as she did so looked earnestly at Dorset with a resolute expression that satisfied him both of her desire and ability to aid him.

At length the king's retainers mustered in the court, and Richard advanced to take his leave of the queen and her royal daughter. When Dorset saw the cordiality with which Elizabeth received his farewell, he started forward and uttered a half angry expostulation, but checking himself he merely drew close to Clara as he passed out following the king, and whispered,

"Enlighten her—in the name of heaven—this must not go on."

"I will, trust me—I will," replied the trembling girl in a hurried whisper.

Dorset snatched her hand, held it a single moment tightly in his, and followed Richard without deigning to cast a single glance on his mother. In a brief time the tramp of horses came up from the court, a moment's confusion followed, and King Richard galloped through the portals, followed by his train.

TO BE CONTINUED.



CLARA.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

CHAPTER IV.

THE queen dowager was in her closet writing, her hand traced the parchment with feverish haste, and there was a hot glare of excitement on her cheek, while the proud arch of her lip was pressed down with an expression of energy which the trying circumstances in which she found herself, had imparted to a character naturally rather luxurious and selfish than energetic. As she wrote a massive ebony clock that stood in a corner of her closet tolled forth the hour.

"Good heavens, another hour gone, I must have help! Yet who to trust? Clara, Clara—yes, her interest goes with us now, and she writes a clerly hand."

With these words the queen rang a bell that stood on the table before her, and ordered the page who obeyed its sound to summon the girl Clara. When the maiden made her appearance the queen gave one glance at her anxious face, and pushing a sheet of parchment across the table, commanded her to sit down and write as she should direct. Clara sat down—the queen drew the great golden standish toward her, took a fresh drop of ink, and the jeweled pen which she held scarcely paused for an instant as she rapidly directed a letter to Lord Stanley, and wrote her own more private directions to the master of horse whom Dorset had left in charge of his troops, at the same time. When both the missives were finished the queen folded them hurriedly, and twisted a thread of floss silk around them, which she sealed with her own signet ring, though her hand shook as she pressed down the wax.

"It will go right if we have but time," she muttered, "Stanley dare not disobey! His son is in Richard's power—Richmond must fall when deprived of his aid and deserted by Dorset. My daughter queen, myself again powerful, and what have we to fear?"

As she spoke the royal widow gathered up the different missives, bound them together in a package and gave them to Clara.

"Take these, give them to a trusty messenger," she said—"let him seek out my Lord Stanley at once and deliver them as directed—lose no time—remember your reward—everything depends on the safe and speedy delivery of these parchments."

Clara was pale as death, her violet eyes deepened almost to black with keen excitement, and her rosy lips were pressed hard together, but she received the package calmly, and when the

queen took off her signet ring and pressed it with a heavy purse in the girl's hand, that little hand never shook for an instant, but closed firmly on the gold as she bent before the queen and moved toward the door. She turned back, however, and approached the table.

"I have a boon to crave of your highness," she said in a low voice. "It is long since I have seen my mother, I would crave permission to depart in the morning and spend a few days with her."

"If the Lady Elizabeth does not object," replied the queen hurriedly, "but let thy absence be short, maiden, we have need of trusty friends around the princess just now."

The queen was completely exhausted by all the agitating scenes which she had passed through during the day, or she would have observed the resolute and unusual manner of her daughter's waiting woman, a manner so at variance with her usual timid and almost childish demeanor that any one with a mind at ease must have remarked it with surprise.

Clara went forth and sought her young mistress.

"Must I tell her all, how would she endure it," said the girl inly, as she mounted the stairs leading to the Lady Elizabeth's apartments—"no, no—let her rest in peace, her gentle nature can hardly cope with difficulties like these, Richard will not persecute her with his love for a few days at least. Till then let her dream on, a few days may change everything, and will—aye, I am sure they will!"

Clara found her young mistress alone, tranquil and apparently happy but quite overcome with the lassitude which was certain to follow any great tumult of feeling in a frame so delicate as hers. She consented with many expressions of affectionate reluctance to be separated from her waiting maid a few days, and tears of regretful tenderness filled her meek eyes as Clara knelt to kiss her hand and departed from the room.

With a quick and noiseless step the waiting woman sought the sleeping room of a page, and took from thence a suit of cast off raiment which was not likely to be missed. By the time she had thoroughly disguised herself and was leaving the castle hall with a dagger girdled to her side, and the plumes of her cap sweeping darkly over her pale face, the dusk had come on, and the gloom which was fast settling over the forest would have terrified a less resolute spirit; but she had a perilous duty to perform, and this thought swept away all timid fears from her mind. She ordered a man who was loitering in the court to bring forth a horse from the stable, and mounting to the saddle rode away.

Some few leagues from the castle lay a hamlet

ELLEN ELMER.

OR, THE SPRING OF THE VALLEY.

BY MARY A. DUNLAP.

CHAPTER I.

It was a pleasant summer afternoon, when a horseman might be seen advancing slowly along a sylvan road, not far from the pretty village of Olney. He was apparently about nineteen, and had quite a prepossessing appearance. His face was manly rather than beautiful, but he had the most lovely chesnut curls, and an eye of great brilliancy and expression. His figure was well knit, and rather above the medium height, and he rode his high-spirited animal with ease and grace.

Suddenly the road emerged from the woodlands, and the traveller found himself in one of those sweet and placid vallies with which our lovely land abounds. On one side in the distance swelled up a gentle elevation, covered with green fields and clumps of forest oaks. On the other side the hill rose more abruptly, though the nearly precipitous sides were, in part, concealed by the primeval trees which everywhere overspread it. For the space of three or four hundred yards, however, immediately before the traveller, both sides of the valley were covered with woods; and just where the cleared land, on the left began, an opening might be seen in the hill-side, as if a lateral valley there ran off to the north. From the precipitous hill-side opposite this gap gushed a spring of the clearest water, which, after falling into a rude stone basin, overflowed the sides, and brawled away in a gentle rivulet.

When the traveller entered this lovely and quiet valley it was already late in the afternoon, so late that the sun was beginning to decline behind the western hills, and his beams, struggling between a clump of maples in the distance, were silvering the water in the fountain and gilding the greensward around, with farewell radiance. The solemn shade of the valley everywhere, except in this spot; and the deep quiet of approaching evening caused the horseman to draw his rein insensibly and gaze on the landscape. He had thus stood a moment when, from the gap of the opposite hill, emerged a young girl scarcely above the childish age, but of wonderful beauty. Her dress bespoke her a cottager; but nature had bestowed on her a face and form that would have been envied by the proudest princess. Her hair was raven, soft and silky, and fell in natural ringlets over shoulders exquisitely rounded and white as statuary marble. Her eyes were large, full and dark, and her mouth the prettiest in the world.

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"By Jove!" said the youthful traveller, "a perfect beauty. I have not seen so elegant a face and figure among all the beauties of New Haven. What a glorious woman she will be. Faith! how prettily she trips. As old Sir John Suckling has it, her feet, 'like little mice peep in and out.' I'll ask Arabella who she can be."

The girl had by this time advanced to the spring, where she filled her pitcher, and then turned to look around, while she rested it on the stone basin. Never was a more beautiful picture as she stood there, for but one moment, with the mellow sunlight falling around her form. Suddenly her eye caught that of the stranger. She blushed at his ardent look, and catching up her pitcher, bounded off like a startled fawn. The gaze of the horseman followed her until she disappeared. When he looked at the fountain again the sunshine had disappeared. He heaved a deep sigh and said,

"Heigho! the place seems dark as a dungeon without her. She came and went like a fairy. How charmingly she blushed! I wonder how old she can be?—thirteen I should say. If she were older I might lose my heart. Beautiful child!"

He put spurs to his horse, and at a gallop dashed down the road, turned sharply into the little lateral valley, where she had disappeared, and keeping on with unabated speed through the village, which lay there hidden in the lap of the hills like a violet nestling in a quiet nook, never drew rein until he stopped before an imposing mansion embowered in trees, about a quarter of a mile beyond the hamlet. Here a servant quickly appeared, to whom he flung his bridle. A minute after he was welcomed by his guardian, and then, in rapid succession, by the lady of the house, and her daughter Annabel, the latter of whom coming forward with an affected air, languidly bid the handsome youth welcome.

Henry Osmond had been left an orphan at an early age. His father's will had appointed for the guardian of the boy a gentleman every way worthy of the office; and under whose care the property of the young heir had accumulated during a long minority to a fortune unusually large. This guardian had an only daughter, who, though yet young, was of unbounded ambition, a trait which she inherited from her mother. These two had long resolved in their own minds that the young heir should be the husband of Annabel; and so adroitly had they manœuvred that Osmond, ever since he began to think of the subject at all, had considered it as a matter of course that Miss Webster was some day to be his wife. The father stood aloof from these machinations, of which indeed he was

scarcely conscious. But regarding Osmond as a lad of high promise, he treated him as an especial favorite. Thus the young heir found himself universally courted at the hall; where accordingly, he always spent his vacations. On a visit of this kind he had now come.

"By the bye, Annabel," said Osmond, the next day, "who is the pretty girl I met at the valley spring yesterday? She has dark hair and eyes, and may be about thirteen. I saw her enter the second cottage on the right as I turned into the street. She is the most beautiful creature I ever saw, or dreamed of."

"Indeed!" said Annabel, surprised out of her usual languid tone.

"Yes! a perfect Helen—only too young for that," added Osmond, coloring at his earnestness when he saw his companion's eye fixed on him.

Annabel, though scarcely sixteen, had already learned to be artful. She saw that Osmond was interested in this girl, and she determined to destroy the power of her rival, even at the expense of a falsehood.

"She is pretty, but that is all. Such a temper: her mother can do nothing with her. She wished to bind her to us, but ma would not have her about the house on any account. There was some talk about her having committed a theft that would have sent her to the Penitentiary, but it was hushed up: for her parents are excellent people in their way, only poor, and you know, as all such people are, very vulgar."

Osmond sighed involuntarily that one so beautiful should be so base; he implicitly believed all that his companion had said. He thought no more of the pretty cottager that day; but if her image afterward would sometimes rise before him, he dismissed it, with a passing regret.

CHAPTER II.

YEARS had passed away since the events narrated in our last chapter, and Osmond, having completed his collegiate course and made a tour of two years in Europe, was once more on a visit at his guardian's. He had been received by Mrs. Webster, now a widow, and by her daughter with smiles and courtesies; and Annabel was already arranging in her mind what her wedding dress should be, and in what style her household should be arranged. Not that Osmond had said anything to warrant the supposition that he contemplated a speedy marriage, but Annabel and her mother had no doubt he would now settle, and whom would he choose but her whom he had tacitly regarded from boyhood as his future wife? Besides, Mrs. Webster had more than once known third parties to tease Osmond about her daughter, and in no case had he uttered a denial, but

seemed to consider the marriage as a matter of course.

And such indeed had been Osmond's determination when he arrived from Europe. He remembered Annabel as quite a pretty girl, a little affected it is true, but to atone for this, very accomplished, and having an exquisite taste in dress. She had, moreover, left on his mind the impression of an amiable heart, for he noticed that she was always dutiful to her parents, and kind and condescending to the servants. But now, on his return, though he found her improved in personal appearance, her affectation, instead of disappearing as he hoped, had grown into a habit: and, on one or two occasions, he had overheard slight altercations between her and her mother, when it was supposed that he was out of hearing. These things made him hesitate in executing his first resolution to propose for Annabel at once. He determined to wait, and observe, before he made the final step.

The Sunday after his return he rode over to church in the neighboring parish, intending to dine with the minister, an old friend of his father. After service the good old man came out and shook him heartily by the hand.

"Welcome back, my dear young friend," said the rector, "you grow more and more like your father. You will come and dine with me. That is right. You know our Sunday fare, so I need make no apology. Leave your horse here; the sexton will bring him over to the parsonage; and then we can walk home through the orchard."

At dinner a young lady sat at the head of the table, whose appearance struck Osmond so forcibly that only politeness restrained him from staring at her. She was eminently beautiful: and, moreover, it seemed as if he had seen the face somewhere before, though where he could not tell. He knew the rector had never married, and he had never heard of any relatives. Besides the name was a strange one, Elmer. Miss Elmer! He had never heard of a family in the county of that name. When they adjourned to the library, Osmond could not help alluding to the subject.

"Ah! yes she is a lovely creature," said the kind old minister in reply to the young man's remark, "and she is as good as she is lovely. You are right in saying the name is a strange one in the county. The poor girl is an orphan. Both her parents died about four years ago, shortly after they moved into this neighborhood. They were but poor cottagers, though they had seen better days. As there was no one to care for their daughter, I received her into my house, and when poor old Hannah, my housekeeper, died, the dear child took her place, and I think

we shall never part, for I love her as my own flesh and blood, and I believe she would make any sacrifice for me."

The conversation now changed, and after awhile Osmond left, promising to return soon again. Nor was he long in fulfilling his promise, for the image of the beautiful housekeeper was constantly before him, and the week seemed dull in which he did ride over to the parsonage at least twice. Annabel began to wonder at the frequency of these visits, but as she knew nothing of the attractions of the good rector's household, she remained in happy ignorance of the threatened destruction to her plans.

If the rector saw the growing interest of Osmond in his protégée, he at least said nothing, but suffered matters to take their course. The young man, let him come as often as he pleased, was always welcome, and, after awhile, the minister did not hesitate to leave the housekeeper to entertain his guest, if duty required his own presence elsewhere. These *tête-à-têtes* became, finally, the most precious portion of Osmond's visit; and he even began to feel disappointed when his venerable friend was able to remain at home, preferring much rather the sweet society of Ellen Elmer. Yet he was not in love: at least he was not aware of being so. He was only conscious of having more than once contrasted Annabel with the good rector's protégée, and the result was always in favor of the latter.

CHAPTER III.

A DELICIOUS October morning! The sky was without a cloud, the air fresh and balmy, and the song of the corn-huskers rang from hill to hill. As Osmond rode through his favorite lanes, in his way across the country to the parsonage, he thought he had never seen nature so beautiful. And when, alighting at the garden gate, he beheld Ellen in the porch as if awaiting him, with a heightened color in her cheek, and a look of welcome in her eyes, his heart beat tumultuously.

They walked together into the neighboring parlor. The rector had gone out; and they seated themselves in silence. Somehow Osmond had never felt so happy. The remembrance of her look as he rode up lingered in his memory; and for awhile he remained without speaking, indulging in this delicious recollection. At length he spoke,

"Do you know, Ellen," he said, "that I often think I have met you somewhere before; though when, or in what place I vainly try to call to mind. I am sure I have either seen or dreamed of a face like yours."

Ellen blushed to her brow, and then gave him an arch look.

"And *have* you *never* met me before?" she said.

"I cannot recollect where."

"Perhaps I can enlighten you," she replied.

"Do you remember, four years ago, the first day you arrived at Webster's?"

"Yes!"

"And do you remember stopping at the spring in the valley?"

"Why—you are not the beautiful cottager I saw there!" exclaimed Osmond, a sudden light breaking in on him. "Yes! I see it now. There are the same eyes—the same hair. What a fool I have been!"

Ellen now blushed more than ever. Suddenly the look of radiant joy died from Osmond's face: he remembered what Annabel had told him. And could this lovely creature, whose society had grown almost necessary to his existence, have been the disobedient child, the victim of her violent passions, of whom Annabel had spoken. His brow grew clouded. But noticing Ellen's eye fixed inquiringly on him, and dreading lest she should attribute it to a wrong cause, he rallied himself, and soon pretending that he had come on especial business with the rector, took his leave.

Poor Osmond!—how he suffered during that ride homeward. The pain with which he learned Ellen's identity convinced him that he loved her. He could not, for a moment, think of marrying a person with such violent passions; and he almost hated the orphan for having deceived him with her apparent sweetness of temper, which he now saw was only put on for the occasion. These were his first feelings. But after he had ridden a mile, he began to ask himself if Annabel might not possibly be mistaken. He recalled to mind all that the good rector had said in her favor; and the result was that he reached home with a comparatively light heart, determined to bring up the subject before Annabel.

But this designing girl, though utterly ignorant of the cause that prompted Osmond's enquiries, remembered the incident to which he alluded and adhered to her former story, adding,

"I believe I told you her parents were respectable people; but I was deceived. They left the village directly afterward, and no one knows where they went. Why do you ask?"

Osmond hesitated whether to confess the truth; but some unaccountable impulse suddenly decided him to do so. Annabel's color changed at his relation: she felt she had gone too far; and her very embarrassment strengthened the doubts of her truth which had begun to arise in Osmond's mind. He ventured to say,

"But are you quite sure that you are not misinformed?"

Annabel for an instant forgot herself, for she now saw, for the first time, she had a rival, and in the surprise, her usual dissimulation in Osmond's presence gave way before the natural violence of her temper.

"You may believe me or not," she said, with eyes sparkling with rage. "You seem to think more of that beggar's word than of mine," and, overcome by passion, she burst into tears and rushed from the room.

Osmond rose in astonishment. His worst suspicions of Annabel's temper were confirmed, and his doubts as to the accuracy of her relation increased. He resolved to satisfy himself at once by returning to the parsonage, waiting there for the rector, and unburdening to him his whole mind. Few men could be as energetic as Osmond, and before noon he was closeted with the minister.

"My dear young friend," said the rector, when Osmond had finished his narration, "every word of that haughty woman's story is untrue. I have long known her passionate character, her disregard of truth, and her own and her mother's designs on you. But I knew your good sense would penetrate their plot: or if it did not, I saw there was time enough as yet to warn you. This accounts for my silence. As for Ellen I have known her for years, and she is as amiable as she is lovely. What you see her, such she is always. Her family, though reduced, is good, much better indeed than that of the Websters. Both her parents bore an irreproachable character. I am shocked at the baseness that could invent such charges against her. Why—at that time—Miss Webster could not have been more than sixteen. Alas! the inborn wickedness of the human heart."

"You relieve my mind from a load," said Osmond, "need I tell you I love Ellen, and that I will, this instant, lay my fortune at her feet."

"God bless you both!" said the old rector rising. "You will never repent of your choice. You will find the dear girl in the garden arbor, for she reads there at this hour every day."

Osmond did find her there, and before an hour he and Ellen returned to the house, and solicited together the rector's benediction. In just one month from that day they were united, their kind old friend performing the ceremony.

Annabel is still unmarried, and she will probably continue so. But though she regrets her conduct, we fear it is not with true repentance.

The last we heard of our hero and heroine, they were established, at a handsome residence, in the same village with the rector, while a family of lovely children was growing up around them.

THE FASHIONABLE FLIRTS.

BY GRACE MANNERS.

"Tis good to be merry and wise,
 'Tis good to be honest and true,
 'Tis good to be off with the old love
 Before you are on with the new."

It was a bright afternoon in the end of November, that three beautiful girls my heroines, sat in a large and handsomely furnished chamber busily engaged in sewing. From the articles on which they were employed as well as from those that were scattered around—one ball dress thrown over a chair, and another suspended to the cheval glass—any one without hearing their conversation, could have gathered that a festival of some kind was in prospect. And so it was; the first ball of the season was to take place that night, and these girls, great belles, were now putting the last tasteful touches to their preparations—Louisa trimming a pair of gloves, Alice, her young sister, an exquisitely beautiful creature, tacking the transparent Meehlin to a lawn "mouchoir" as transparent, and Mary their cousin in fastening bouquets of white flowers on the erape dress that was to form the costume of Alice on this her first appearance.

Their topic of course was of the coming ball, and their equipments; of the bride in whose honor it was given, and of their favorite beaux, whom they expected to meet there. Suddenly a knock at the door interrupted them, and the important face of their old black servant appeared, and announced "the capting to see Miss Louise," adding, while a smile distended his wide mouth, "him in de parlor Miss, and he hab sich a posey in his bunch of fises." A peal of laughter was the reply to this information of old Cato, who withdrew delighted with the amusement he had caused his young ladies.

"Go down, Louisa," exclaimed Mary; "go down, the captain has brought you a bouquet for the ball. I wonder when he returned from his shooting excursion?—oh! what a beauty of a bunch it will be of his selecting," and the laughing girl fairly sent Louisa out of the room.

In an hour she returned, holding over her eyes sun-screen fashion, an immense bunch of dahlias, arranged in the plate style, so common for those ungraceful flowers, and about half a yard in diameter. This she threw on a chair, and sinking into another herself, joined in the merry peal of the other girls at the sight of this most choice and delicate bouquet.

"Oh! girls," she began, "think of his simplicity; think of my carrying that platter to the ball to-night," and she held it to one side of her head

to show its becomingness, and then placed it in her bosom to exhibit its grace, until the girls besought her to be quiet, and tell them if the captain had really requested her to wear it to the ball.

"No, indeed," she replied, "I would not let him; he was going to do so more than once, but each time I prevented him, and he went away without asking me, although he brought it for that purpose I know, and expects me to take it there. He said something about the 'sentiment' and 'sweets to the sweets; now the sentiment is not so bad, but did you ever smell such 'sweets,' there is no perfume at all—and then the colors, the ugliest reds I ever beheld, the dingiest purples, and the most staring scarlet; and I spent an hour with him, over Flora's dictionary not a week since, to give him an idea of what a bouquet ought to be composed of, and this is the result—what a gallant the man is," and the unfortunate flowers were tossed into a corner, where they were picked up some hours after by the maid, and deposited in a cracked-nose pitcher in her own room.

"How, Louisa," said Mary, "how can you laugh at the poor man in this way, and what will you say to him when you appear without his 'posy,' as Cato well called it?"

"As to laughing at him, I never do so to his face, so that does him no harm; and as to the non-appearance of the bouquet, I can easily say it was too large and handsome to carry, and (so it is, I am sure,) and besides I am not so certain of being without one after all."

"Oh!" replied her cousin, "I thought the truth would come out; so you expect one from Mr. Seymour; that makes the matter rather worse, I think. Ah! Louisa, the noble captain's star has been on the decline ever since this gay Southerner made his appearance. What a flirt you are."

"Now, Mary," said Louisa, "it does not do for you to call me a flirt with that sober air. Did not I witness your flirtation with the quiet, unsophisticated Mr. Grey last summer? Did not I see you leave your shoe in his hand when he helped you off your horse, and so expose the gentle pressure the poor man had been bestowing on your little foot, and thus made him the laughing stock of the village for a week, and then refuse him after all? Oh, fie! to call me such a name with such sins upon your own head."

"Well," said Mary, "if I did do it the shoe was very large, and the temptation irresistible; and besides it was only with a *widower*; if he could forget the memory of such a lovely woman as his wife was so very soon, and outrage the feelings of her family, as I know he did—I did

no more than right. He *would* beau me, and I trust I gave him a lesson he will not soon forget. Widowers seem to think they have an immunity from the decencies of mourning, whilst a widow is expected to mourn for the rest of her life, 'be she young or be she old,' and is a target for all sorts of sarcastic remarks if she but speaks to one of the lords of the creation. I did but pay off on Mr. Grey some of the debt that my sex owes him. I did it from principle and was glad I succeeded, and will do it again if I have the chance;" so saying she withdrew to dress, leaving Louisa laughing at her, and the gentle Alice somewhat shocked at these *principles* of flirtation thus developed by her cousin and sister.

Louisa and Alice Grenthorne were the daughters of a gentleman of fortune and family, and their cousin Mary was now on a visit to them from her home in a far-off village, where she was as celebrated for her love of flirting as her friend Louisa was in the large metropolis where she resided. Here Louisa had been for some years one of the leaders of the fashionable world; no party was thought complete without her presence; no young man could flatter himself with being completely the ton unless he had been a protégé of hers, or had had the privilege of being one of her dangles. Beautiful, accomplished, high-bred and wealthy, she had reached the age of twenty-four without being married or engaged, and yet had had more offers than any other girl in the same city with herself. What could be the reason—"say what can Chloe want?—she wants a heart." And so it was—she loved admiration intensely, and her vanity was flattered by the number of her conquests, but she was ambitious—ambitious of the trivial distinctions of wealth and rank, and neither of these as yet had been offered to her to the extent she wished, until the appearance of the high-born, wealthy and exclusive Mr. Seymour seemed to place the prize within her reach. For him, therefore, were Captain Maurice's flowers slighted, and from him was the bouquet expected that was to call forth the "white lie" of an excuse, and to be the return for months of devotion of a single and affectionate heart, although it was attended it must be confessed with an awkward manner, and an utter ignorance of the ways and manœuvres of fashionable life.

Thrown together at Saratoga, where he had gone to recruit his health impaired by the hardships of a Florida campaign, his singularly fine and soldier-like appearance had attracted Louisa's attention, and his devotions were accepted as a mere matter of amusement to her in the unusual dearth of good looking beaux that occurred there that season. Not so with him, however. Debarred

for a long period from cultivated society, her beauty, accomplishments and apparent sympathy for him had made a deep impression, and he had followed her to her home in the hope of winning for his wife "this bright, particular star." Utterly unknowing in the ways of flirtations, his many little gaucheries were a great source of amusement to Louisa and her worldly cousin, and though she had permitted and encouraged his attentions, she now, on the appearance of a higher prize, determined to throw him off, and this evening to commence so decided a flirtation with Mr. Seymour as should at once put an end to his hopes and attentions together.

Alice the younger sister was a different character. Educated from home by a high-minded, intellectual aunt, a sister of her deceased mother, she had escaped the influence of the worldly principles and heartless conduct of her sister; and now failed not to remonstrate with her on behavior she thought so wrong and cruel. But ridicule was all the return she received, accompanied with the expression of the hope that she was not going to throw away the advantages she possessed in her beauty and fashion by being a merely correct and well-behaved young lady, and a prophecy that a little more knowledge of the world would enlarge her ideas on that subject, and make her the spirited woman that was so much more attractive. And now on this her first appearance, so many were the instructions she had been obliged to listen to from her sister and cousin, on the subject of eligibles and non-eligibles, that, disgusted and alarmed, she was half inclined to give up her share of the pleasures of the evening and remain at home. But these resolutions were put to flight by the appearance of Cato, bearing in each hand a magnificent bouquet of the choicest and rarest hot-house flowers, disposed with exquisite taste, one directed to Miss Louisa, and the other to the fair "débutante." Alas! for the captain, his staring dahlias were once more produced and contrasted with these delicate beauties, and even the gentle Alice listened to the sarcasms upon them without rebuke, whilst she stood and admired the fragrant flowers of the gallant Mr. Seymour's selection.

True to her determination, Louisa received the attentions of the donor of these sweets with such graciousness and unchecked pleasure as riveted him to her side, while her previous admirer was put off with one dance, and a most ungraciously delivered apology for the absence of the dahlias, and was then neither looked at nor spoke to for the remainder of the evening.

Alice, radiant with beauty both of form and feature, her sweet ingenuous mind looking out from her lovely eyes, had created a great sensation

Surrounded with admirers, she had but little opportunity of seeing how affairs were proceeding between her sister and Captain Maurice; but from his downcast expression when she at last caught a glimpse of him, she concluded that Louisa had put her threat into execution, and been cool to this devoted lover. She longed to say a word of civility to him, but this she could not do, for he avoided her and seemed to seek for companionship only in his own gloomy thoughts.

From this reverie he was roused by her cousin Mary, who, after making a remark upon his recreant lady-love, now deeply engaged in a flirtation with his rival, gradually drew him into conversation, which was followed by the two seeking a retired corner, and there remaining until the call to supper put an end to their tête-à-tête.

Now cousin Mary, notwithstanding her abhorrence of widowers, (which arose from her brother-in-law having married only a year after the death of a sister she dearly loved,) was by no means averse to beaux, either in general or particular, and having a decided liking to military men, she thought the captain, although no match for her very beautiful and wealthy cousin, would do quite well for herself. With this end in view, and knowing well that many a heart is caught in the rebound, she intended first to constitute herself his confidante, then his comforter, finally his wife. The first she had successfully brought to pass that evening; his whole stock of hopes and fears had been poured into her sympathizing ear, and in return it was insinuated by degrees that Louisa *could* sometimes flirt, then that she had been accused of it before, and finally that she was well known in this character, and had been acting in it with him. With the anger this recital called forth she was satisfied, and retired from the ball well pleased that her first step had been so successful; Louisa returned from it delighted with Mr. Seymour's devotion; and also with the captain's discomposure, and Alice enchanted with all the world.

Captain Maurice, however, was too deeply in love to allow of one rebuff, or one malicious insinuation to take the effect intended by them, and the first meeting with his fair mistress, and the sunny smile with which she greeted him, nullified her coquetries at the ball, and regained all her former power over him, throwing her cousin's schemes into the background, and causing him to think it was all a misapprehension of her lively disposition that had gained for her the title of a flirt. Who or what is so blind as a man in love? A bat is an argus to him, for naturalists tell us they will avoid the finest threads spread to entangle them, while the lover is stone blind to

the greatest defects of character in the object of his passion, and turns bitterly upon any who is anxious to open his eyes to his danger. Therefore, cousin Mary, are your toils spread in vain: you must wait until Louisa is, or thinks herself sure of Mr. Seymour, before the captain is fully disenchanted, and your nets can be successfully thrown.

Manifold were the risings and depressions of the captain's hopes during the following weeks. In Mr. Seymour Louisa had, at least, met a spirit equal to her own in the tactics of a flirtation, and the blinded captain was so useful as a rival that he could not be dismissed lightly, and no persuasions on the part of his friends could make him believe that she was trifling with him. To Mary he seldom spoke on account of her former hints, and Alice, too young and timid to take a decided stand, of course could not warn him against her sister, and was obliged to confine herself to entreaties to Louisa, to leave off so despicable and dangerous a game as she was then playing.

In the meantime Mary, who was underhand in everything she undertook, was urging upon Louisa the propriety of bringing Mr. Seymour to the point, and at the same time insinuating to the captain, whenever he would give her an opportunity of conversing with him, that the world would give him the character of an unsuccessful lover if his engagement (which she affected to believe existed) was not speedily announced. Flattered by this last hint, and annoyed by the first, he determined that the opportunity for offering himself, which he had often sought, but in which he had been constantly foiled, should now be made. Accordingly he boldly asked an interview, proposed, and was rejected. Stung with his defeat, angry with her, himself, and all around him, he sought out his adviser to overwhelm her with reproaches for that step which he had so gladly taken.

His first burst of indignation was listened to with such sympathy and apparent sorrow that confidence speedily ensued, and the old story of the dahlias was recounted, together with many other jokes that he had been the subject of, until the half maddened lover was brought to confess that the first account he had received of his fair one was correct, and to curse his own folly in not knowing who was his true friend, who would thus have prevented his being so shamefully used. And now Mary had regained that place in his confidence which she had lost, and which she determined should be speedily followed by her taking the place of her cousin in the affections of the mortified captain.

And how sped Louisa with her Southern lover after she had dismissed her first? We shall see.

A party of young men were seated round their wine, and from their animated gestures and the mirth that constantly broke out in loud laughter, appeared to have some topic of conversation that was highly amusing to them. They were passing in review the many young ladies of their acquaintance, and many and severe were the criticisms these fair ones underwent from this group of modern Parises. The style, form, manners, walking, dancing, hands and feet of the different belles, were severally brought forward and commented upon; some few with praise, but the greater part as food for fun and derision. According to them a woman needed to be endowed with the luster of Venus to make her at all worthy of their fastidious tastes. The two, however, who had most admirers as to beauty, were Louisa and Alice Grenthorne, and Mr. Seymour, who was of the party, was congratulated as the happy man who was to carry off the eldest of these belles.

"Thank you," replied he, "for the compliment to my taste, but do you think I would *marry* that girl? Why she is a flirt, a known flirt, and the future Mrs. Seymour must be 'sans tache' in that respect."

"Why do you flirt with her, then?" exclaimed several voices.

"Because she invited me to it. No man ever did flirt with a woman without her first giving the encouragement. Girls of true dignity never flirt. Alice Grenthorne would never do as her sister does. *She* is truly dignified. And I for one, when I fall in with a flirt, always think of those lines that Miss Edgeworth quotes in her inimitable *Patronage*—and that are there applied to waltzing—

'Sir, she's yours—you have brushed from the grape its soft blue,

From the rose-bud you've shaken the tremulous dew—
What you've touched you may take—
Pretty lady, adieu!—

so any one may have Miss Louisa for me—her blue 'has been rubbed off' too often for my taste, and I shall leave my P. P. C. at the door before long, and take my way to Europe again. I hope she will be married before I return, but I doubt it"—so saying, this gentleman flirt rose from his seat, and the party broke up.

The winter passed away. Alice had been the reigning belle, and notwithstanding her sister's prophecy, continued the same unsophisticated, unaffected girl, and spring found our heroines unchanged in name, nature, and apparently in happiness. But was it so?

The month of May is now nearly at its close, and with its roses and its thousand sweets, is filling the air with perfume. The three friends

are again together, engaged in apparently the same occupation as when they were first introduced to us, but now they are at their country seat, and through the open window the honeysuckle and the violet are pouring their odors. The sharp grating of carriage wheels on the gravel, and the quick shutting of their doors proclaimed the arrival of a large company.

Orange flowers are being placed in the delicate veil that half covers the face of one of the two, and as she pushes it on one side to listen to a well known step that sends the blood in a richer color to her cheek, the lovely face of the young Alice beams upon us. There she stands in her youth and beauty, about to give her hand to one well worthy of her love; and there stand her two bridesmaids, with smiling brows and mortified hearts, for both had been disappointed in their ends, and the baffled flirts were now tasting the bitterness of the cup they had bestowed on so many. Louisa's admirer had proved more expert at her own weapons than she was: devoted to her for months he had never committed himself; and had gone to Europe, leaving the lady to wear the willow with what grace she could. Mary had out-generated herself with the gallant captain. He had been so disgusted with her treachery to her cousin, that he had taken a speedy leave of her, determining that his next flame should be neither a beauty nor a manager.

Our sweet Alice, whom we have left a long time standing in her bridal array, made a conquest her first memorable night of one every way excellent. Of splendid talents, great resolution and untiring industry, Arthur Hampton was known as one of the most rising young men at the bar. At the time he addressed the fair Alice he had nothing to offer her but what his own energy could carve out for himself, and she loving him for that self alone, was willing to share his moderate fortune, notwithstanding the ridicule and opposition of her family. But time changes everything, even the flinty hearts of old bachelors—for a wealthy uncle of Arthur's, who had never married, was so struck with the strong love and resolution of this young couple, that though he had hitherto done nothing for his nephew, he now announced him as his heir—making him by this means a desirable match for any one, as even Louisa was obliged to allow. The old gentleman closed his letter with the remark that if it had been the unprincipled flirt of a sister, Hampton should never have seen one cent of his money.

The life of Alice is as happy as woman could wish. Respected and beloved by all, she has but one source of vexation, and that is in her sister, who still continues her flirting career, and

at the age of twenty-eight is yet eager for admiration, and still single. Cousin Mary married a captain as she desired, but he was a widower after all—and she is obliged to forget many of her own opinions, and to shut her ears when the faithlessness of men is brought upon the tapis. And so ended our two flirts.



THE FLOWER GIRL.

A TALE OF THE CRESCENT CITY.

BY "THE POOR SCHOLAR."

CHAPTER I.

In the year 18—I was employed in an official capacity by the First Municipality Council of the city of New Orleans. I am a Lyonesse by birth, and upon the escutcheon of my family, I believe, no blot can be traced. The letters which I brought from my native country, recommended me warmly to some of the first families of Louisiana, and the consequence was an appointment shortly after my arrival to an office of honor and responsibility.

One morning, at an early hour, I received intelligence that my presence was required near the "Mercado de los vegetables" or Spanish market. The most direct route from my lodgings to this place lay along the Levee, and as I had sallied out at an hour somewhat earlier than my appointment called for, I walked leisurely along, enjoying the cool breeze that came from the river. The sun had just arisen, and his rays, not yet disagreeably hot, were converting the yellow waves into gold! A thousand vessels of every size and fashion, from the huge *batteau de vapeur*—the floating palace of the rivers—to the small goleta of the Spanish Main, and the still smaller pirogue of the coast planter, slept upon the bosom of the broad stream! Away below in the direction of Le Tour Anglais, lay a large frigate, her tall spars outlined upon the surface of the water—the *fleur de lis* of France drooping from her mizen-peak, while the shrill music of the boatswain's whistle died along the wave, recalling the happy memory of other scenes and climes! Farther up could be heard the strange, wild song and chorus as the crew of the stevedore freighted the merchant ship for the ports of distant lands!

The heavy bell of the old Spanish cathedral pealed forth the signal of devotion!—many a lovely devotee was kneeling in the antiquated naves, while her sweet lips breathed forth the accustomed matins!

There were few persons on the streets, save those whom, like myself, duty had called forth to taste the early breath of the morning. Here and there citizens issued from their houses, taking the direction of the market; and a party of sailors released from the weary watch might be seen crossing over to a café to partake of the intoxicating draught. I entered the market—within its precincts all was life and activity. Here stood the fruiterers from the Ysla de Cuba, calling out, "naranyas! manzanas de pinos!" there the slave

mulatto of the planter not less loud in praise of his yams and melons; while ever and anon might be seen, gliding around the portales, the beauteous quadroon, of rounded classic form, her glossy black hair peeping from beneath the folds of the costly Madras, while the wild light of her fiery eye gleamed in triumph as she detected the admiring glance of the passing cavalier.

Having finished the business which had called me forth, I returned toward my lodgings. As I sauntered along in front of the Plaza de Armas, enjoying the tranquil beauty that reigned around, my ear was suddenly arrested by a female voice pronouncing the words, "voulez vous acheter un bouquet, monsieur?"

There was something so ravishingly sweet and feminine in the voice, that a far less sensitive ear than that of him thus addressed would have been constrained to listen. Turning round in the direction whence it proceeded, I beheld standing by a small table, covered with flowers, not only the most beautiful creature I had ever seen—but one fairer than my brightest fancy had ever conceived. She was a brunette of the Castilian order—with light hair, high forehead and sunny eye. The pale lily of her beauteous cheek was but slightly tinged with the rose; but the pulpy red lip, the liquid glance, the goddess form, and the soft sweet *patties* of the "voulez vous acheter un bouquet, monsieur?" at once bespoke the Creole of Louisiana, or the French West Indies.

She seemed about fifteen years of age, but her form owing, perhaps, to the influence of climate, had more than half way budded into womanhood, and its exquisitely rounded development, unconcealed by the harlequin cut and tawdry finery which characterize the dress of a European maiden, appeared to advantage in a suit of simple black, fashioned according to the dictates of a superior mind. Her dress was long, reaching to the earth, while the small, fascinating foot cased in a white satin slipper, peeped stealthily from beneath it. Her hair was worn *a la Creole*, and a snow white cambric scarf drawn over her marble brow, formed the simple, yet classical *coiffure* of the brunette fleuriste.

All the philosophy of the "nil admirari" on which I had been in the habit of pluming myself, vanished in a twinkling; and I stood for some moments gazing in silence wrapt in the contemplation of her peculiar beauty.

"Voulez vous acheter un bouquet, monsieur?" repeated she, seeing that I had as yet made no reply to her simple interrogatory. I still remained silent. I could not speak—I could only gaze, worship, adore. Mistaking my impertinent admiration for an ignorance of the language she had spoken, she addressed me in Spanish.

"Quiere usted comprar las flores, Senor?"

I had by this time recovered from my trance.

"Si, si, Senorita, ángel mio, con gusto," said I, answering her in Spanish, so that she might remain ignorant of the true cause of my hesitation.

Without further ceremony I proceeded to examine the bunches of flowers, or rather pretended to examine them, for I constantly found my eyes wandering toward the face of the brunette—there was a kind of magnetic fascination in her unfathomable eye irresistible as it was beautiful, which controlled my every movement, yet there was also a counteracting influence, for though love gushed from the liquid orb, there gushed too a glance that repelled and chastised illicit curiosity. My eye quailed before that glance—though I could have gazed for hours (myself unseen) at its wild, yet lovely light. I even looked around to see if fortune had not favored me with a position from which (unobserved) I might contemplate so much beauty—but nothing was there but the broad, bare Levee, glistening beneath the rays of the sun.

As she observed my hands passing mechanically among the flowers, (my thoughts were certainly not among them) I could detect a slight smile on her prettily curved lip.

"Choose what bouquet you please, Senor!" Her voice woke me from my reverie, and I replied with some earnestness.

"With your leave, Senorita, I shall place this lily in my *conservatoire*, that when I look upon it, its beauty and purity may remind me of you!"

Instead of the smile with which I expected to be repaid for this compliment, an expression of displeasure passed over her beautiful features—she remained silent—I had evidently offended. I will essay again, thought I.

"Your flowers are arranged with exquisite taste, Senorita!"

"Perhaps, so, Senor!" was the only answer. Finding that I had destroyed all chance of further conversation, I purchased the unfortunate lily, and reluctantly continued my walk. When I had reached that corner of the Plaza that opens out into Rue Chatrés, I cast a farewell look toward the flower stand. The exquisite figure, and beautiful features of the brunette could even be appreciated at such a distance! Other purchasers had come up, and were selecting from her bouquets—she was smiling upon them! How I envied them those smiles!

CHAPTER II.

I HAVE always been noted for my aversion to flowers—especially plucked ones. The only flower I ever loved to look upon was the blinding

of the rose and lily upon the cheek of beauty. I own my position seems peculiar, anomalous if you will—yet 'tis a just one, and will find an echo in the breast of many a reader (not feminine.) No! far be it from me to disparage a love of the soft, the bright and the beautiful in those who are themselves the type and essence of softness, brilliancy and beauty. I have been thus particular in stating my natural aversion to flowers, that the reader may fully appreciate the change which took place about this time, in my tastes and feelings. All at once I became passionately fond of flowers. A large bouquet always fresh bloomed on my dressing-table: roses were twined in the frame of my mirror—the upper button-hole of my coat never wanted an orange blossom—and a small hyacinth bound by a golden pin and chain figured on the bosom of one of Callot's best embroidered. I loved flowers from a sense of gratitude—gratitude for the many pleasant interviews they were the means of procuring for me with the brunette fleuriste, with whom I had unconsciously fallen deeply in love.

Morning after morning found me sauntering along the Levee, and loitering in the Piazza de Armas—morning after morning saw me purchasing her costliest bouquets, yet weeks had passed over, and I could not flatter myself that my *person* had attracted even a passing attention from the pretty fleuriste. I advanced but slowly in her acquaintance—she studiously avoided conversation—I was, therefore, under the necessity of sustaining both sides of the dialogue, which generally ended in my making of myself what in Spanish is politely termed “*un borrico grande*.” Once I was so impudent as to press her fair fingers as she presented me with a bouquet, but their quick withdrawal, and the look which accompanied the act, warned me sufficiently against a repetition of the impertinence.

I was piqued to perceive that she treated me with even more coldness (I thought so) than other purchasers of her flowers, many of whom seemed equally anxious to ingratiate themselves in her favor.

I was deeply in love, and as deeply did I endeavor to conceal it. We are jealous lest those we love should know of our passion. I tried to impress the little fleuriste that my fondness for flowers was alone the cause of my making so many purchases.

“What does Monsieur Le Capitaine,” (she had learned my name and occupation) “do with so many bouquets?”

Dear little creature! had she only followed me into the Rue D'Orleans, she might have seen many of her handsomest sets flung carelessly into the channel, or handed as carelessly to the

first girl whom I met, and who would repay me with smiles, but her smiles were lost on me—my heart only beat for the pretty brunette fleuriste. In endeavoring to make one friend I unconsciously made fifty, for there was hardly a maiden in the Rue D'Orleans who did not believe that I was irretrievably in love with her.

There were others who sold flowers in front of the Piazza, and fruits and birds from the West Indies. I inquired the name of the brunette. Natalie—(what a beautiful name!) further than her name they were ignorant—she was a stranger to them—she came from the direction of the Faubourg Clouet, generally accompanied by a gray-haired old man, and sometimes (but rarely) by a youth whom she called Luis. Ha! thought I, I have now discovered the cause of her coldness toward me; this youth, this Luis is her lover—and favored too! From that moment I became miserable!

The old man I had frequently seen—he was her father—he seemed to be upward of sixty—of gentle, manly, though reduced appearance—his countenance bore the impress of grief. He rarely staid by the fleuriste, but might be seen seated on an old wooden pier that projected into the river, and commanded the view to the seaward. Here he would sit for hours without changing his position, his eyes bent in the direction of the Tour de Anglais, while the loiterers of the Levee would pass and repass without being favored by a single glance.

One morning I was occupied in the Piazza with a party of gen d'arms until a late hour. As I dismissed the party the sun was just climbing to his meridian, and I could perceive through the paling that surrounds the Piazza, that the little fleuriste was about preparing to return home. Giving my accoutrements to a servant, I strolled toward the front of the square. As I drew near unperceived, I could hear her soliloquy, “oh! the sun has grown so hot! why does not Luis come!” I was about to offer my services to conduct her home, when a fine looking youth, dark haired, and apparently about eighteen years of age, appeared around the corner of the paling and presented himself before her. “Ah, dearest Natalie,” said he, “forgive me for keeping you in this boiling sun—I could not leave the office one moment sooner!” So saying, he took up the flower baskets and prepared to depart. This then, thought I, is the favored lover, this the Luis! Happy mortal! what would I not give for permission to walk by her side and carry those flower baskets even under the hottest sun—I shall at least see where she resides—and I turned to follow the fleuriste and her lover. They walked for some distance along the Levee until they

reached the Spanish market, then turning down through Daunois they entered the Faubourg Clouet. Through Clouet they kept on until they had reached the very outskirts of the suburb, at least two miles from the Piazza de Armas. Here they entered a cottage almost buried in vines and orange trees. Twice only during their long walk did Natalie look back, once while passing through the Faubourg Daunois, and once as she entered the cottage; her look, however, betrayed no interest in the movements of him who followed. I retraced my steps to the city, wearied, dispirited, hopeless!

CHAPTER III.

A FEW mornings after the occurrences related in a previous chapter, I seized my hat, cane and gloves, and sallied forth upon the Levee. It was a beautiful morning in June, and the whole crescent harbor seemed alive with the bustle of commercial enterprise; clerks were running to and fro, bearing samples of rich produce—bells were ringing—travellers with portmanteaus were hastening across the shell pavement of the Levee to take passage for the cool climes of the north—boats were hissing forth the accustomed signals of departure—others again had got under way and stood out into the stream, the starry flag waving from their signal mast, while the strains of national music came trembling along the water, blent with the trumpet notes of the escaping element, and the wild, clear "yo-hall-ho!" of the boatman's chorus!

I sauntered along endeavoring to abstract my mind from the painful yet pleasant theme upon which it constantly dwelt. The effort was vain—I could think only of Natalie! Her image was ever before me, bright, beautiful, and virtuous; but alas, my mind too conjured up the handsome figure and fine countenance of her accepted lover. I felt jealous and despairing—vain would be my attempt to rival him! What were rank and wealth in the eyes of one so truly possessed of the *mons divina*; for every action of the brunette fleuriste avowed its presence. I felt that all my accomplishments, my sword, my bright epaulettes and plumes created but a passing interest in the breast of the fleuriste, while he the handsome Creole youth occupied the sole affections of her heart. He seemed too, to be a favorite with the old man, her father. I had seen the three walk side by side toward the far superb Clouet.

Can she believe my intentions dishonorable? True, my situation in life is far removed from hers, but have I not always behaved with the most scrupulous respect? And is there any situation too exalted for so much loveliness? Shall I again attempt to see her? I have not been to the

Piazza for several mornings, though the denial cost me many an effort! I can no longer resist the temptation to gaze upon her beauty, though to me as the waters to Tantalus. I shall once more visit her—perhaps my unusual absence may have awakened an interest in my favor! One inquiry as to its cause would mellow the anguish that gnaws at my heart!

With these reflections passing through my mind I neared the great Piazza. The old man as usual was sitting out on the projecting wharf, his eyes bent in the direction of Le Tour Anglais. The river was rushing by red and swollen, and I could frequently see the time-worn pier on which he sat quiver to the force of the current.

I was about to warn him of his danger, but turning toward the Piazza I beheld the brunette arranging her flowers, and the thought vanished from my mind. As I drew near I thought I could perceive a mingled expression of surprise and pleasure lighten up the features of the fleuriste—it was momentary—she is glad, thought I, that I return to purchase her flowers. No! that could not be, for she had once or twice chided me for spending so much money on bouquets—I approached and saluted her. Her reception as usual was civil—I commenced making a selection from the baskets, when to my delight she inquired, "why Monsieur Le Capitaine had been so long absent?" and added that "she feared he had been unwell." She seemed agitated—was it possible that she could be interested for me? I purchased some flowers and left the spot with a lighter heart than I had known for many weeks. Hope had once more dawned upon it.

I had walked only a few paces from the flower stand when my attention was attracted to the firing of heavy guns, and looking in the direction of Le Tour Anglais, I perceived a large frigate under French colors standing up the river, seemingly with the intention of making anchorage opposite the Piazza de Armas.

The old man who had been watching her for some time turned around, and made a signal for the fleuriste to join him, who immediately leaving her flowers walked out on the pier.

Prompted by curiosity I crossed to the nearest range, being the one below that occupied by the fleuriste and her father. As the frigate began to appear opposite the city, the loungers from the cafes and the idlers from the Levee came running out on the wharves to witness the novel sight. Presently a large crowd passed hurriedly out on the pier occupied by the fleuriste and her father, the old timbers groaned and bent beneath the heavy tread—there were heard shouts of "hold! hold! the pier is giving way!" then followed a loud crash—a scream—shouts and oaths,

and in an instant the whole party were precipitated into the deep, red current!

I could see the eyes of the brunette turned upon me as she sunk beneath the surface—I lost not a moment, but plunging into the river struck out for the spot where she had disappeared—she soon came up again, and throwing out her arm as though by an effort pointed to her father who had risen at some distance. A sailor was about to rescue him—I heeded not—I perilled life only for her! I swam toward her, but before I could reach the spot she had disappeared a second time beneath the wave! Wild with despair I struck out where I supposed the current might carry her, and dropped myself into a perpendicular position so as to intercept her floating form. I waited the result—something pressed against my knees! I dived—but unsuccessfully! the object was borne on by the rapid current—I swam wildly to intercept it—I again stood upright in the water—again the object touched me—I dived once more, and returned to the surface with the insensible form of Natalie in my arms! Words cannot express my feelings at that moment—even in the cold wave my heart thrilled with rapture at the embrace! It seemed the crowning of an age of bliss! I am an excellent swimmer—the fishermen of the Gulf of Lyons can testify to this—I struck for the shore with my lovely prize, but before I could reach it we were picked up by a ship's boat that had rowed in for the purpose. I used every means to restore the fainting Natalie, and in a short time sensibility returned.

"Dost thou not know me, Natalie?" said the old man bending over her, and raising her in his arms. She seemed to recognize him, her soul was fast returning into its channels, and in a short time perception was completely restored.

Having procured a carriage, I seated myself beside the brunette and her father, and accompanied by the sailor who had rescued the old man, we drove for the Faubourg Clouet. Time may mellow but can never efface the looks of gratitude (and might I say love?) that beamed from those liquid eyes. He alone who has saved the life or honor of a lovely maiden can know what transport, what rapture it is to be the sole object of the wild devotion of a female heart! From that moment I lived—I became intoxicated with visions of happiness, nor did a thought of the absent lover Luis arise to mar my dreams of bliss!

We reached the Faubourg Clouet and entered the cottage of Adolphe de Launçais—for such was the name of Natalie's father—the fleuriste retired to her chamber and medical assistance was called. I staid for sometime conversing with de Launçais, and was much surprised to find him not only a man of education but of travel and

experience. He was profuse in his expressions of gratitude, but they were delivered in such a manner as proved how deeply he felt them. As I arose to depart the door suddenly opened from without, and Luis, the lover and rival, entered—I attempted to avoid him, when to my surprise the young man rushed up, and grasping me by the hand, ardently thanked me for having saved the life of his sister!

"And," said I, unable to restrain myself, "is Natalie your sister?"

"Certainly," said he, somewhat puzzled by the manner of the interrogatory. "I have been up on the Piazza and heard the whole of it—ah! Monsieur Le Capitaine, but for you my little Natalie would now have been no more—and my father too—thanks, my brave fellow, thanks!" said he, turning to the sailor, and warmly shaking him by the hand—"we are too poor at present to offer what I am convinced you would not accept, a reward, but you must come and stay with us while your ship is in port—you shall here find a home and a welcome!"

The old tar was affected almost to tears. We prepared to depart—as I entered the carriage, young de Launçais took my hand in an affectionate manner.

"Monsieur Le Capitaine, you will not think our home too poor to be honored by your presence? I have heard of your kind heart—the little Natalie has told me of your fondness for flowers—she may not sell any more in the Piazza. It is her own choice as our garden supplies plenty; we can live without it—but should she, Monsieur Le Capitaine, do not insult her by offering hereafter to pay for them—choose the fairest—the best—but do not offer money!"

"Would that I might choose the fairest of those flowers!" The carriage at that moment drove off, but as it turned the angle of the street I could see young de Launçais standing where I had left him looking after me in surprise. My parting words had mystified him.

CHAPTER IV.

At an early hour next morning I was in the Piazza. Natalie was not there. The place seemed lonely without her. It was pleasant, however, to linger near a spot that had become to me so interesting.

There was the dark-eyed Italian Frutero with his heaps of oranges and pine-apples, plaintains and guavas; there was the mustached Spaniard, with cigarrillos, macheros and Guayaquil hats, and there too were the parrots swinging in their cages, and looking as wise as though they understood all that was going on around them; the bouquetiers were standing by their baskets, but the fairest

flower of them all was not there. I stopped a moment opposite the deserted stand, some withered roses, the scattered remains of yesterday's collection, were lying on the little table. There were several inscriptions on the smooth surface that seemed the work of leisure moments, executed with striking taste; representations of flower baskets filled with flowers—bouquets, and some couplets in French which not only displayed good penmanship on the part of the writer, but a taste for the finest poetry.

As I glanced over the inscriptions, a figure near the corner of the table arrested my attention. It was a drawing representing the flower of the hyacinth, and underneath were the letters H. A. D. Good heavens! is it possible that these were meant for the initials of my name, Henry Auguste Durand? Can Natalie ever have thus thought of me previous to the occurrence of yesterday?

"How is Natalie, Monsieur Le Capitaine?" inquired a little quadroon with dark, fiery eyes, who kept a flower stand in the Piazza, and who had been a witness to my saving the life of the fleuriste. Before I could reply a large, green parrot who hung overhead repeated the inquiry—another followed, and another, until along the whole line ran the query, "how is Natalie, Monsieur Le Capitaine?" It seemed as though the very birds felt an interest in the welfare of the little brunette fleuriste. Amused with the incident, I retraced my steps toward the Hotel de Norte Americane.

The following morning and I was again in the Piazza—I approached the stand of the fleuristes. Natalie was not there. A beautiful bouquet lay upon the table—"how came it there?" inquired I from the quadroon.

"They had been brought by Luis, the Creole," was her answer, at the same time handing me a note addressed "Le Capitaine Durand." I opened the note and read—

"Will Capitaine Durand accept the accompanying bouquet of flowers?"

LUIS DE LAUNCAIS.

I took up the flowers, they were of the rarest kind, arranged with exquisite taste; in the centre of the bouquet was a hyacinth—a flower for which I had often, in the hearing of Natalie, expressed my partiality. I felt that for me the fingers of the brunette had arranged those flowers, and the thought filled me with pride and pleasure.

As I turned the bouquet in my hand I detected a small strip of paper rolled upon the stem of the hyacinth: taking it out I read—

"Will Capitaine Durand wear the hyacinth?" There was no signature, but the writing was that of a female hand, and I doubt not that it was

Natalie. Child of innocence, she loves me then, and has not the art to conceal it! She loves me—thrilling thought! Yes, dearest Natalie, it shall be worn over a bosom filled only with affection for the donor. But am I deceiving myself? and with the doubt—I re-read the paper. Is there aught here but the warm expressions of a maiden's gratitude? With these doubts and reflections passing in my mind I returned to my hotel. I had made up my resolution to visit her. Having ordered my horse I started, accompanied by my servant, for the far suburb. At a brisk gallop we passed down the Levee, crossed through Clouet, and stopped before the cottage of de Launcais. Leaving my horse in charge of the servant, I entered the cottage—no one was visible, but the door which led into the flower garden in the rear stood open—the inmates evidently were in the garden. I passed through the open door which commanded a view of the enclosure. On one side the old man was engaged in watering some lilies, but my eye roamed elsewhere, and I recognized the form of the brunette in an arbor of oranges. In a moment I was beside her—she seemed embarrassed by my presence, and would have retreated.

"Stay but for one moment, dearest Natalie!" I could no longer restrain myself—"stay and listen to me—since our first interview you alone have been the sole object of my thoughts—I love, nay, adore you—forgive me for thus abruptly avowing what I am no longer able to conceal—I offer you my hand—if you cannot return my love, oh, do not condemn my life to misery by an absolute refusal—leave me still some hope!"

This, as near as I can recollect, was my declaration. She listened to me with attention, and without withdrawing the fair hand which in my fervor I had seized, she replied, though her clear voice trembled.

"Can Monsieur Le Capitaine forget that his situation in life is far above that of her whom he has honored with the offer of his hand?"

"Say not so, I am but a soldier of fortune, whom to-morrow may leave penniless—yet would not infinite wealth overmatch so much beauty—so much virtue—speak, dearest Natalie—hold me not in this torturing suspense—is there a hope?" She stood a moment with her beautiful face averted, while the hand that still remained in mine trembled to the touch—that moment seemed an age—an age of anticipation—my breath became suspended—my heart beat at long intervals, and I felt as one waiting for the sentence of life or death—she turned her eyes upon me with the smile of a seraph—I shall never forget that look—and in a soft, sweet voice pronounced "there is!" I know not what

I may have said—I clasped her wildly to my heart, and kissed the lips that had breathed forth the glad words. It was the happiest moment of my life!

CHAPTER V.

NEXT day I sat in the cottage alone with de Launcais. "Captain Durand," said he in answer to a very formal request I had made, "your attentions to my daughter have not passed unobserved—and the little Natalie has made me acquainted with the nature of your interview of yesterday—she loves you—you have declared yourself willing to become her husband—I will not stand between you and your wishes, yet ere I part with a gem peerless and priceless, I would request the fulfilment on your part of certain conditions. Mark me—I only request it. Accede to my terms, and my daughter is yours, refuse my request and I must still acknowledge that you have fairly won her—I shall not endeavor to keep her from you."

"Name the conditions!" said I eagerly, "and if possible and compatible with my honor, they shall be fulfilled."

Drawing his chair closer to me, and requesting my promise of secrecy, the old man continued—

"The family of de Launcais have not always been the inmates of a cottage. I am one of the unfortunates of St. Domingo, in which island, previous to the breaking out of the insurrection, I was the proprietor of a large estate in the neighborhood of Leogane. I was one of the wealthiest of St. Domingo's wealthy planters, and at the commencement of the revolution held in my possession a large amount in gold coin, besides a valuable property in plate and jewelry. Fearing an attack from the insurrectionists, I took the precaution to deposit most of this treasure in a small vault in the garden of my chateau, the entrance of which was concealed from observation, and known only to myself and my son Luis. It was so placed that it could be taken up at a moment's warning as soon as an opportunity offered of our leaving the island. Our house was attacked in the night by a tumultuary rabble, and by the assistance of a faithful slave, (since dead) myself and children narrowly escaped with our lives in an open boat. I was compelled to leave the treasure—since that time I dared not return to the island, as my presence there would ensure my death, and for years have I been in search of some one in whom I could repose sufficient confidence to assist my son Luis in recovering my wealth. The treasure is large, and I could not, therefore, make known its existence to a stranger, besides the difficulty of reaching it will require the utmost caution—and failure will ensure the loss not only of the property, but also of the lives

of those who may adventure. To you I would entrust that commission. I do not make its execution the price of my daughter's hand, yet would I wish to bestow along with that hand a dowry suitable to her birth and family."

It is unnecessary to say that I embraced the proposal, and after having received the necessary directions from de Launcais, prepared to depart. I obtained leave of absence from my duties, and with the assistance of Luis we were soon ready to embark. I had chartered a small Spanish goleta, and engaged a crew consisting of the sailor who had saved de Launcais, two others, and two gens d'armes—men whom I had proved worthy of trust. These, with Luis and myself, who alone knew the nature of the enterprize, comprised our company. After bidding farewell to her, the lovely prize that was to crown my exertions, we stood down the river, and soon cleared the Passes. On the fifth night after we had taken our departure from the Balize, our little goleta (called the Donna Inez) lay in the bight of Leogane opposite, and about half a mile from that shore called by Columbus the "Vale of Paradise."

Favorable to our scheme the night was dark, yet even through the gloom we could see a fine looking chateau fronting the bay, which had once been the mansion of the de Launcais, and which was now the object of our visit. About midnight leaving the schooner in charge of a seaman, we dropped our boat and rowed silently for the shore. All seemed asleep. We disembarked in a small cove, and leaving the boat fastened, we clambered up the rocks. Passing among groves of palm and plantain trees we reached an enclosure which had evidently been the parterre of the chateau, though now the fine paling was thrown down and some horses and mules were running wild over the sward—on one side of this enclosure was a lane fenced by jessamine hedges, and overshadowed by luxuriant orange trees. Keeping up this lane we reached the paling which formed the garden fence—this too was broken down, and the whole enclosure, even in the darkness, exhibited marks of the desolating rule under which the land was laboring. Here we stopped to reconnoitre the house which from this point was visible. Lights were glaring from the windows, and rude voices occasionally heard in oath echoed along the piazzas. A party of soldiers were evidently carousing in the chateau, and as the point of our destination was in the centre of an orange coppice directly under the windows, we saw that the utmost caution would be required to reach it. As force was now out of the question we prepared to obtain the treasure by stratagem. Luis was familiarly acquainted

with the locality of the vault, having known it from a child. Leaving the four men concealed among the shrubbery, we crept stealthily toward the spot. At intervals the light from the windows of the chateau flashed upon us, and we were under the necessity of lying flat on our faces so as to escape observation. We could see the figures of men, mostly negroes, in uniform, and mulatto women passing and repassing along the corridors, and hear their rude jests, accompanied with oaths, and the clinking of glasses. We reached the coppice, here we were secure from being observed, and by the directions which I had received from the elder de Launçais, I should at once have found the vault. Luis, however, knew it well. The entrance was concealed by some loose rocks that had evidently lain undisturbed for years. We soon removed these and came to a broad flag in which were two iron rings. This with some difficulty we succeeded in raising, and underneath discovered the object of our search, consisting of plate and coin to a large amount. After placing it in bags which we had brought with us for the purpose, we commenced our retreat to join the party in the shrubbery. As the immense weight of the treasure prevented our crawling along the ground, the danger of returning from the coppice was much increased. We were obliged to walk erect, and, therefore, more liable to be seen from the piazza. There was no alternative, and we emerged from the friendly shade of the orange trees. We had reached but a few paces in the direction of the lane, when a watch dog that had been prowling through the garden detected us, and immediately set up a loud baying. Some one hailed him from the house, but as he continued to bark furiously several persons came out on the piazza carrying lamps. The light flashing upon our faces discovered us to the party in the corridor, who immediately set up the cry, "*Les blancs! les blancs!*" and started in pursuit. Further attempt at concealment was now useless, and running toward the lane we gave the signal to our companions whom we found ready to receive us. No time was to be lost—entrusting the bags to two of the men, the remaining four of us formed to cover their retreat. About thirty blacks were in pursuit, and more were issuing from the chateau—I could see their naked swords gleaming in the light that came from the windows. Taking good aim our party fired. I saw several of the negroes fall, and heard their groans and curses. Staggered by the unexpected reception the pursuing party stopped. This was for us the critical moment, and taking advantage of it we ran down the dark lane and reached the boat where the two men

with the treasure had already arrived. We had not, however, one moment to spare, the pursuers were already on the beach. I was the last to enter the boat. As I stepped over the gunwale a huge mulatto dressed in the uniform of an officer of the Haytian republic, rushed into the water and made a thrust at me. As I turned to parry it my foot slipped and the sword of the negro passed through my right arm making a deep flesh wound, and completely disabling me. He was about to repeat the thrust—I was at his mercy when a pistol flashed, followed by the quick report—the mulatto threw up his arms, staggered a step toward the beach, and fell with a heavy plash upon the water. Luis de Launçais had repaid me for the life of his sister.

Before any other of the pursuing party could reach us the little shallop was gliding out toward the schooner which we reached in safety. No time was to be lost as the negroes were getting out their boats, and we could hear their threats and execrations across the water. The breeze luckily was blowing from the land, and in a few minutes the goleta, under full sail, was standing toward the distant island of Gonaïves. We were detained in the gulf by contrary winds, and it was ten days before we made the Passes of the Balize. The fever caused by my wound had been gradually increasing, and before we reached the city reason had forsaken me—I was delirious.

I can recall nothing that passed during my delirium. All seemed like a troubled dream, in which demons strove to torture me, but were prevented by the interference of a lovely being my guardian angel. When I awoke to reason I found myself lying on a couch in a spacious chamber elegantly furnished. An ottoman stood in the centre, while mirrors and rich tapestry adorned the walls. Flowers were strewn over the ottoman, and around my couch were placed bouquets of hyacinth and orange blossoms. A large glass folding door was in front. It stood open, but curtains of blue silk were suspended over the door-way to mellow the light. The cool breeze playing into the chamber at intervals flung up the silken fold, and I could gain a glimpse of the scene without. It was the loveliest prospect I had ever beheld. An elegant marble fountain was playing in front of the window—the orange tree hung its boughs over the basin, and dipped its golden fruit in the crystal water—while groves of lemon and laurel stretched away on the green bosom of the parterre, beyond the broad river was rolling silently on, its wave burnished by the beam of the setting sun, whose lower limb had disappeared behind the dark foliage of the distant cypress wood. The varied lay of the mock-bird, blent with the

deep, clear notes of the oriole, and the rippling murmur of the fountain filled the air with music and melody.

While I was gazing on the fair prospect a side door gently opened, and turning my head I beheld—the guardian angel of my dreams—the brilliant, the beautiful Natalie de Launcais!

It is fifteen years since that time. I am now writing in that same chamber, and at intervals gazing on the same lovely landscape. The fountain still flings its crystal jet into the marble basin—the orange spreads as ever its golden foliage—and the broad river still rolls silently on. Yet is there some change—a fine mansion (the chateau of Luis de Launcais) stands on the opposite bank of the river, which fifteen years ago was not there—and two young Creoles with flashing eyes and raven locks are playing on the green sward of the parterre. A female form bends over the balustrade and watches their gambols—she appears to be the young mother—a smile is playing upon her red lips, and her sunny eyes flash with fondness. How lovely she seems! she never looked more beautiful! not even when first seen as the *brunette fleuriste* of the *Plazza de Armas*!

FLORA.

A BACKWOOD'S STORY.

BY MRS. H. N. SARGENT.

"ARE you sure, Flora, you love this stranger well enough to leave mother, sisters, friends and home for him; and permit me to add an easy life of social enjoyment among friends for unknown connexions?"

Flora's cheek was varying through all the shades from rose to crimson, as with earnest voice and tearful eyes her mother thus questioned her, and her trembling fingers scarcely held the needle with which she was embroidering some trifle. Mrs. Worthington waited a few minutes, and as Flora did not speak, she continued.

"I need not repeat what you have so often heard, that marriage is the most important step in a woman's life. Men may marry injudiciously; and, for a time, may be very unhappy; but a thousand avenues lie open through which they may seek relief from the annoyance of a disagreeable companion. Ambition beckons him up the dazzling ascent to fame, or the acquisition of wealth may engross his time and energies; and he meets so many objects abroad to divide his attention that his home may become only like his boarding-house, so that however unpleasant such a state of affairs may be, his is not an absorbing grief, he does not lose caste in the world, but continues to occupy that position to which his wealth or condition may entitle him, and may select his own associates. On the contrary the wife becomes but a chattel in the eye of the law, a creature to be supplied with the necessary comforts of life but as his ability may procure them for her, to enjoy such society only as his condition in life may afford, for she sinks at once to his grade, and perhaps becomes the inmate of his relations. All this requires a very devoted degree of attachment, and unless a woman can truly say in the touching language of Ruth, 'my country shall be thy country, and whither thou goest I will go also,' she had better pause, for repining after marriage is as hopeless as ungraceful, and never is able to avail itself of the sympathy it may excite. This man is, I admit, handsome and agreeable, but he is a stranger of whose connexions we know nothing, but with whose habits and prejudices, for everybody has prejudices, you are unacquainted. Dearest Flora, be sure you love him with that true love that admits no diminution, and let me think when I lose my daughter that her happiness at least is secured by the sacrifice," and the tears which she could no longer suppress rolled down the mother's cheek.

Flora leaned her head on her hands and wept also, but she spoke no word.

"Tell me truly, my daughter, do you love this Freeman well enough to abandon all that is now dear to you for new and untried friends and scenes?"

"Dear mother it is very—very hard to part with you, but—"

"But harder to part with Freeman. Be it so, Flora, and may the Father of the orphan bless you, my daughter," and Mrs. Worthington hastened to shut herself in her chamber to give vent to her sorrow and anxiety in tears.

Flora was the youngest of four sisters who were all married but herself. She was just twenty-two, rather handsome, very agreeable, and a favorite in the circle in which she moved; but a slight vein of satire that sometimes spoiled her conversation, gave evidence of latent temper that the vexations of life had not yet drawn out. The flash of her dark eye and the haughty curl of her crimson lip when crossed in any little plan she had formed, told too of a spirit that would joy in the stormy elements of life, but that life had hitherto flowed so placidly that even she fancied herself good tempered.

A few months previous to the date of our story she had been introduced, by one of her brothers-in-law, to a young stranger from the extreme west of our country—or rather what *was* the extreme west some years since—who was on a mission of some public nature connected with state affairs, from his section to congress. By one of those unaccountable freaks that people puzzle themselves to give rational reasons for, Flora fell in love, and the stranger fell in love too, especially after hearing she was possessed of a few thousand dollars. He was soon Flora's declared and accepted lover, and as he assured her "he could not live" without she accompanied him home; and she too feared "she should die" if she had to remain all winter in the city without seeing him, it was arranged they should immediately be married, and Mrs. Worthington having given a reluctant consent, Flora prepared to follow him with the confiding trust of woman, and thus give another commentary on the old saying of "marry in haste and repent at leisure."

It was a beautiful autumn evening when the city bred girl arrived at her husband's home. They had taken a carriage at the landing on the river, and the billowy prairie spread its living carpet of green far as the eye could reach, while the scarcely perceptible road wound on through its blooming luxuriance. Soon a tall forest lifted its undulating line along the horizon, and as they journeyed on a clearing began to be visible, the long waving curl of blue smoke ascending far up

into the serene ether. At first appeared large corn fields, then a barn, and lastly a log cabin built on the verge of the wood, but not close enough to be benefitted by its shade, while felled timber and corn cribs, wood sheds and pig-pens obstructed the path to the door of the rude and lowly dwelling. There was a dark red spot on Freeman's cheek as he approached his home, and to Flora's eager questions relative to his family, he gave such brief and unsatisfactory answers that a long silence had sunk down over them, and Flora felt chilled by his reserve. A lad ran out of a field and in joyful haste hailed his brother, while his white head, bare legs and arms, and ragged trowsers excited a surprised stare from Flora. Throwing him the reins, Freeman lifted his bride to the ground, and in that moment an old woman in a red flannel dress, white cambrio cap and lilac apron came to the door, and sticking her thumb into the short stemmed pipe she was smoking, she gave a loud cry of joy and grasped the hand of Freeman. Flora shrunk back as she extended her hand the next moment to her, and only permitted the tips of her gloved fingers to come in contact with the hardened and sinewy hand that so cordially welcomed her. It never occurred to her that those limbs might once have been as soft as hers, until exposed to toil and hardships for him, whom she had preferred to all the world, and that hers, in turn, might become as rigid in time. She only felt disgust and surprise at her uncouth costume, and stopped not to reflect how many sterling virtues might be covered by the coarse, homespun garb. Several fine, sun-burned young men, all in country garb, came crowding in, and as Freeman presented each in turn she formally curtsied to each, and with a flushed cheek and contracted brow sunk on the chair the mother of the family offered her. As she looked round on the humble, but neat dwelling, the plain, useful furniture, the nicely arranged beds and implements of female industry, her angry passions were awakened at what she thought had been a trick played on her by Freeman, and she internally resolved to maintain her own habits and manners, and as early as possible disengage herself from all connexion with her husband's family. The elder Mrs. Freeman now approached, and in a kind voice invited her to take off her things. While disrobing, the boys placed a large pile of wood on the ample hearth, and calling on their mother "to make the fire," followed their brother out. Flora looked with dismay at the heap of logs, sufficient, as she thought, to dress a dozen dinners; but the old dame soon rolled them into order, and a blazing fire and the clean hearth spread an air of comfort over the apartment. Mrs. Freeman, with the

dexterity of a back-wood's cook, soon produced a supper that astonished even Flora by its variety and plenty; and the kind and affectionate manner of the old lady to her sons, and their frank, good humor would have conciliated any heart but hers. She sat sullenly brooding over her fancied wrongs until a real headache, which was at first only an excuse for not eating, drove her to bed. Freeman and his mother sat long conversing together, and Flora saw tears bedewing the venerable cheek of the old toil-worn mother, but so far from softening her heart she tried to strengthen herself in her aversion to her mother-in-law.

Thus Flora continued proud and cold toward her husband's relatives, sighing for her own city home, and ridiculing, with all the sarcastic irony of her natural disposition, everything and every one that accorded not with her own ideas of propriety. Freeman gradually grew rich and popular, became a man of public business, a politician, and spent but little time with his cross wife. The only friend in fact that sympathized with her ailments or bore with her fretfulness was her despised mother-in-law; and when ill health, the result of voluntary confinement and sedentary habits, made her a prisoner at home, she was the only one who offered to console her or to alleviate her sufferings; for her husband had long since learned "he should" *not* "die" of absence from her. Poor Flora, she had cast the gem of life that gave it all its lustre from her, and no wonder everything was dark to her.

At length Flora became a mother, and through the sweet little girl that was her own image, she once more felt the stirrings of affection toward the husband whom she had so long treated with contemptuous aversion; but it came too late. He scarcely marked the quivering lip, the tearful eye, the changing cheek of Flora as she uncovered her little treasure to present it to him, and only remarking, "that children were great annoyances," he coldly left the room. From that hour Flora grew very ill. She felt she should die, and all the kindness, all the forbearing love of Mrs. Freeman rose up to reproach her.

One day as she was tenderly placing her pillows, Flora drew her cheek down to her lips and kissing her, burst into tears. The old lady gently returned her caress, and disengaging her arm from her neck soothed her into tranquillity.

"Mother," said she tremulously, and it was the first time she had ever thus addressed her—"mother, it has been a great mystery to me how you, who were tenderly nurtured in your youth, could ever brave hardships and toil in this new country; and instead of sinking under it grow healthy and happy, and remain even now, in

old age, so active and so capable of serving all around you—of making all love you."

"I will tell you, my Flora, this mystery was *love*—love, nature's *primal word*, as an old German woman once called it to me in my youth. I loved my husband fondly and rationally, and we came to this new land—for it *was* new then, for the sake of our children. I loved my children, and when *He* took my husband I managed by active industry to keep them together; I taught them their duty to God and to man, and instructed them by my example to love all mankind.

"You do not hate even me, then?" said Flora softly.

"No—I have been vexed sometimes, but never once did I harbor such a feeling as hatred, and above all not to the wife of my first born." Flora closed her eyes, but the tears were still stealing down the pallid cheek.

"There is a love, Flora," the old lady gently began, "even stronger than human love. It is the pure, divine love that pervades the heart of the Christian. Would that you, dear Flora, might once feel its divine influences—it would illuminate the path of life even to you."

"Say rather it would light the dark valley, dear mother," said Flora, "for it is that I feel I shall shortly tread. I have thrown from me all the affection that might have made life happy, and now I am going to die with not one—not even him——" and her voice grew husky and choked by tears. Mrs. Freeman saw she was too ill to talk, and so it proved. Flora died—died in the prime of life with none to regret, and only one high minded Christian to soothe her through the dark shadow. She died on the bosom of her mother-in-law, and her last hoarse whisper was, "Teach my little Flora this mystery of love."



GOING TO BOARD.

BY MRS. JANE D. BALDWIN.

SHADOWS, clouds and darkness rest upon it.
 Chacón a spn gout. ADDISON.
OLD PROVERB.

I HAVE often thought with surprise on the very slight reasons (if they deserve the name,) which cause so many of our citizens to weary of house-keeping, sell off elegant and expensive furniture, and resort to a practice at which our grandmothers would have held up their hands in astonishment, but one now warranted by custom, viz: "going to board." For where can a man returning from the business of the day, whatever that business may be, often tired, sometimes dispirited, hope to find that same peace and quiet from the world's cares, as in the privacy of his own home? And how little regard for her husband's happiness must that wife have, who, rather than "*immure herself*" within the seclusion of a peaceful, retired home, drags him, against his own judgment and inclination, to some fashionable boarding-house, giving to her submissive spouse these arguments to overbalance all his objections—"as long as we keep house we are subject to annoyance from the negligence of servants: besides, really, my dear, for the same money that is required to keep house, we could board in a very fashionable house in the best part of the city. And only think on its advantages—no domestic occupation, no cares. I should then have more time to practice my almost forgotten music, while I feel assured that the disappointments and annoyances arising from difficulties with servants will be the ruin of my already shattered nerves." This last appeal added to the allusion to her music—an accomplishment in which she had from long years of close application attained a rare excellence, but which had ever since their marriage been neglected—prevails. The indulgent husband gives an unwilling consent to sell off their furniture and go to board, bartering away peace and quiet for splendor. Alas, for him!

Poor man, ere two months, he has to bear with more petty grievances, more inattention and neglect from waiters and chamber-maids than fell to his lot in a year in his own house. His wife, however, has gained her point, the odious house-keeping has been given up; she now adjusts her curls and dresses for dinner, a practice that had become obsolete when there was no one but *just her husband* to see it. Pity that the great object, marriage, once attained, for which young ladies torture their hair, dress, and endure the agony of practicing a thousand little amiabilities, they

should so soon learn to consider their husbands as no longer gentlemen!

Nor is this custom by any means confined to people of *pretensions*. People of no pretensions are to be found, who, for some particular motive, some darling object in view, will sell off the furniture which cost so much bargaining and long waiting *and pinching* to obtain. The old chairs and toilet covers worked by their grandmothers, are, without a second thought, consigned with "*the rest of the lumber*," to the hammer. "But what of it," says the wife, "is it not a more easy life when one has six little children to attend to, to board than to keep house?" And the poor submissive husband, like the one above cited, for "suffering seems to be the badge of all their tribe," consents, reluctant to quit the happy home of his boyish days, the house where his old father died, to rent it to a stranger that his wife may luxuriate in indolence.

He must send his two eldest boys to a boarding-school, and the two eldest girls to his old maiden aunt in the country, the two youngest being all that the lady of the boarding-house can be prevailed on to take. He is a kind, indulgent father who would gladly have superintended the education of his children, were his wife a capable, a judicious mother, but now he has to send them to a distant boarding-school: he is domestic in his habits, but now he has no home to come to when the toils of the day are past. A boarding-house parlor agrees not with his old fashioned notions of quiet and privacy, and when he would take refuge from its jargon of stocks and politics in his own room, long before he reaches the door he is arrested by the screaming of both children, aided by the little slipshod Irish girl, singing as she rocks the baby, "there came to the beach a poor exile of Erin." On enquiring for his wife he is informed "the mistress til git out o' havin o' the childer had gone acrost the enthy til the lady's room forminst." In vain he endeavors to quiet the children: tired and dispirited, there remains no alternative but to return to the noisy parlor, or go from room to room in quest of his wife.

How little must such a wife value her husband's comfort: and how many such men, of steady business habits, temperate, economical and with bright prospects of "rising in the world," kind husbands and indulgent fathers, have been driven to seek for happiness, or rather forgetfulness abroad, when they had no longer a home of their own to go to.

The next mania of which I would take notice is the practice of quitting large and airy houses in the city for two months every summer to board out in low, farm-houses, for the sake of pure air, i. e. because it is fashionable to do so. This

custom compels them to leave a commodious house, attentive servants and clean streets, for dusty roads and irregular and badly cooked meals; large beds and mattresses, for cots and feather beds; lofty ceilings, and window-sashes that if required at night will slide down from above, for low roofs on which the sun had blazed mercilessly all day, and windows of four panes nailed in the frames, so that having no ventilation these small sleeping rooms may not inaptly be compared to as many ovens; yet such is the force of custom that the same people who tried country lodgings last year and the year before, will again this summer, with only the difference of changing the place.

I once, at one of these fashionable rusticated places, (four miles out of town) met with an intelligent southern lady, a widow, who had been detained by indisposition while passing through the village to New Haven, where her children were at school. This lady by way of comforting me for the many privations which I suffered from want of books, or any work of sufficient interest to occupy me, causing my time to drag most wearily along, told me of *her experience*, as she called it, in boarding during the summer months in farm-houses, adding, "be of good cheer, you have been here two weeks—the balance of the time will be soon past. I do not tell you of my experience to frighten you, but merely because 'misery loves company.'

"It is about four years since I left New Orleans, bringing my little family to the north as much for their health as for the advantages it possesses over the south in point of education. I took a neat little cottage in the town of B——, having in my eyes two great recommendations, viz: its proximity to the church and school-house, where I lived in the utmost retirement. It is true, at first, all the village gossips called on errands of discovery to ask *who* I was, *where* I came from, and *who* maintained me while here, *when* I was to return home, how old I was, and the age of my father and mother? But when they saw their calls received with cold civility—and none of them returned—these evils ceased to exist, the acquaintance formed on all sides soon died a natural death, and I was again left to undisturbed enjoyment of my books, my music, and the society of my children. Matters thus went on smoothly till spring, when in the month of May, being really unwell, I followed the advice of my physician who recommended me to quit house-keeping for a few weeks, and try boarding in some pleasantly situated farm-house.

"One was particularly recommended as being near a much frequented summer bathing place. The terms were soon arranged, and leaving my

little family in charge of a respectable elderly female, whom I had engaged to keep house during my absence, I *started*, as we Americans say, for the little watering place of Algiers.

"Being early in the season, I was the first boarder to arrive. A neat airy room overlooking the bay was allotted me, the ceiling moderately high, and the four windows of a size a marvel in the country. Two of these opened into a rather pretty garden. This being my first trial of country boarding, I was as long as the little stock of books which I had brought lasted, quite content. The board, it is true, after the first day was nothing to boast of, but that I forgave, having a good supply of crackers and guava jelly with me, which served in the double capacity of lunch and dinner. I got through the first three days comfortably enough considering the excessive heat; for the dining-room was merely the kitchen, the huge fire-place being divided from the part where the table was set by a screen; when I add to this that the sun shone in at both breakfast and dinner through open and uncurtained windows, you may know that the heat was oppressive.

"On the afternoon of the third day, on my return from a walk on the beach, I saw a carriage at the door and the usual accompaniments of a country party, crying children, a nurse—trunks and band-boxes lumbering the hall as the narrow entry was called. Hurrying up stairs to be out of the way, judge my surprise on finding Mrs. Process (the lady of the house) and her two nieces at work in my room, carrying out my books, work-basket, trunk, &c.: Mrs. Process was herself busily employed changing the sheets and pillow-cases on my bed. On enquiring the cause of this expulsion, Mrs. Process, with the utmost sang froid, told me that 'the new-comers wished for this room, and as it could not make much difference to me, and as it would have been a great disadvantage to *her* to have lost them, she had given it up to them.'

"Where there was no redress complaint was useless, and I was thus *sans ceremonie* removed to a small room containing two beds—one of which was pointed out as mine, (her two nieces slept in the other.) In vain I remonstrated against a feather bed. I was told with the utmost complacency that the only mattress in the house was that belonging to the room just vacated. What could be said to anything as conclusive as this?

"The family just arrived consisted of Mrs. Prie, the wife of an eminent New York divine, her mother, two children and servant. Mrs. Prie was an amiable and accomplished woman, who laughed while she commiserated me, when a week after I related to her how unceremoniously I had been deposed to make room for

her. She then jestingly observed, 'it would be her turn next;' and so it turned out; for, the next day's steamboat brought a letter from a family in New York, who wished to engage board for one month. The offer was too tempting to be refused, and a polite answer, stating Mrs. Process' readiness to receive them, was sent by the next day's mail, vaunting at the same time the advantage of sea breeze and accommodations, although the only two bed-rooms in the house were at the time crowded. So *where* this other family were to be lodged passed my comprehension.

"While the impossibility of the thing was running in my head with my very limited ideas of what country lodging keepers *can* do on a pinch, Mrs. Prie came to me with a face of wonderment to *where* the new-comers *could* be stowed away, I replied by saying that I had intended to ask her the very same question. While the matter was in agitation between us, Mrs. Process made her appearance to say that she had written to New York and expected the other family to-morrow, that she had arranged it that they were to have the large room. 'Where was Mrs. Prie and mother to sleep?' 'In *that* bed,' pointing to the one where her two nieces slept. 'And your nieces?' 'Oh! Lucy can sleep at a neighbors, and Lydia can sleep with this here lady,' turning to me. 'And the children?' 'Why I can make a *shake down* on the floor for them.'

"Thus had this accommodating lady arranged everything quite to her own satisfaction. *Ours* was a matter of small consequence. The new comers not being expected till the next day, Mrs. Prie was to remain in undisturbed possession of her room for that night; but much to Mrs. Process' surprise, she was summoned early the next morning by Mrs. Prie's servant to her mistress' room, and a request made to bring up her bill. At first she doubted if she heard aright, but on seeing her neighbor Jones' wagon at the door, she could no longer doubt the evidence of *both* senses. In vain she clamored of her disappointment—of Mrs. Prie breaking her engagement, and of the expense incurred in fitting up her house. Mrs. Prie was inflexible, and insisted on immediately having her bill made out. In a half hour I waved my handkerchief to this amiable family, as they passed the piazza puffing and plashing their way back to the city—happy in their return from country lodgings.

"The family who that morning arrived to take possession of the room so suddenly vacated by Mrs. Prie, consisted of Mrs. Wain, a beautiful and most amiable woman, and six lovely children. Her husband, the Rev. Dr. Wain, accompanied them, and remained two days. One of her little girls slept with me, while the babe slept

or rather lay awake, and cried (as well it might) with its nurse on a '*shake down*' in the entry, the remaining children being accommodated in a similar manner in their mother's room.

"About a week after their arrival, I saw what appeared to my sharpened vision as a note of preparation in the shape of two old fire-screens which Mr. Process was patching one above the other at the upper end of the entry. This done, the next question was, where was a door to be got that would fit the intervening space between the screen and entry partition? After much essaying and consultation, the milk-room door was unhinged and fitted into the space, thereby forming a small room. On returning to my apartment after dinner, I saw that my wash-stand and feather bed had been removed. Turning to go down stairs to enquire after it, I met with the indefatigable Mrs. Process in the entry. 'What have you done with my bed?' I asked. 'I have taken *them* for a rheumatic sea-captain, who I expect to-morrow. Awhile ago you said you did not like feather beds in summer, and preferred sleeping on a mattress. I have had the under bed filled with nice, fresh straw: and as to the wash-stand, gentlemen always look for one when they lodge out, while I thought it would be no great *inconcommodement* to you, as you could just as well come down of a morning to the kitchen to wash.' Annoyed beyond all bearing, I left the house the next morning, with a lighter heart than I had possessed since leaving my own comfortable home."

Thus Mrs. Blanc concluded her description of the miseries which had attended her essay at boarding in country houses, and I could not but agree with her, from what I had seen in "mine own experience," that it is but a poor substitute for the Springs or the Sea-Shore; and I feel quite certain that I will not again be easily induced to relinquish all the comforts to be met with in a city for the meagre hope held out of "fresh air" in the country.



FLORENCE;

OR, THE BOUQUET.

BY ANNE PEYEE DINNIES.

"You must not eat my flowers?" said a young lady to the gentleman with whom she was dancing, one cold night last February.

"Oh, forgive me," he replied, "I was unconscious of my rudeness: In listening to your conversation I involuntarily practised the royal pastime of *swallowing ornaments*! Are these very dear to you?"

"Yes! Cleopatra could far more easily have replaced her pearls than I, at this season, procure another *such japonica*—besides, it was *a present*," she added, smiling meaningly.

"And what is its signification?"

"My destiny is in your hands," was the prompt reply, as a slight blush shaded the cheek of the speaker, and she gazed with seeming indifference upon the floor.

"Florence!" said the gentleman, whom we shall call Ernest Rowly. "Florence—Miss Moreland, who gave you the bouquet, which you seem so highly to prize, and whose language, it appears, you are familiar with?"

There was a grave seriousness in the tone and manner of this question which touched Florence quite sensibly; for, sooth to say, of all her beaux, and she had a score, none pleased her half so well as Ernest Rowly. He had never passed in his attentions beyond the politeness which every gentleman feels bound to offer to the belle of the season—and Florence Moreland was that most envied, enviable, criticized, and caressed thing, the belle of the season, in one of the gayest cities of the west. She was the only child of one of the wealthiest merchants in the place, just seventeen, and very beautiful. Did it require more to render her a belle? No, reader, it did not. But Florence united to a quick perception of character, and great natural ability, a well cultivated mind, much refinement of feeling, and an independence of disposition, which gave to her manners a peculiar fascination. This was felt by all who knew her, although few ever inquired into the cause of her attractions. She knew that she was admired, and that her father's wealth would render her hand no inconsiderable object in the speculations of the needy adventurers who yearly seek to make or mend a fortune in the west; that Eldorado in the imaginations of southern and eastern unfortunates. But Florence had early received the impression, that in addition to her other possessions was that most inconvenient article for a belle, *a heart*. Not the light appendage which is so often talked of, and written of, and jested with, and

trafficked for—but a real, pure, glowing, woman's heart; full of deep emotions and high capacities, which reposed in quiet loneliness like the waves of the lake, awaiting the angelic visitant who was to stir it into exertion. And she had resolved to guard it alike from the invasion of others, and her own kindly sympathies—and hence arose the one fault which cast its shade upon the gay and lovely Florence; she was called, and, perhaps, justly, a coquette! But she never seriously encouraged the attentions of those she meant to reject—she trifled amid the butterflies of the ball-room as the rose flutters in the summer breeze, flinging sweetness around, but retaining no prisoned zephyr among its leaves.

Ernest Rowly was a young lawyer; one of those talented sons of New England who leave their paternal mansions with their only inheritance wrapped within the folds of an overcoat, and their only anticipations for the future based upon the well-stored region covered by a travelling-cap. In a land like this what more is required? He had youth, health, and a pleasing address—a noble profession, and a heart throbbing with high principles, strong impulses, and a determination to succeed in the world. Is it wonderful that, in a few years after locating in the city, in which resided the father of our heroine, Ernest Rowly was looked upon by its inhabitants as one of the most promising men at its bar? Steadily, but noiselessly he had risen into notice; and the success which had crowned his efforts in some more than ordinarily important cases, had fully established him as a sound lawyer in the opinions of his fellow citizens. Still he mixed not much with society, but continued to study as closely as if he had excited no sensation in his profession. Night after night had Florence marked his light still burning, when after an evening of dissipation she was retiring at a late hour to rest; and night after night did she sink to sleep, contrasting in her mind the occupation of her student neighbor, with the frivolities of the throng of fashionables in whose society she had spent so many idle hours.

Whether it was this nightly custom of thinking of him, or some other unexplained cause, I know not; but certainly Florence had learned to regard the young lawyer with far more interest, than, as yet, she had experienced for any other person. He came but seldom to her father's house, and when he did so, the general urbanity of his manner left it more than doubtful whether the fair Florence had anything to do with the visit. Still his language was so chaste—his smile so winning, and his whole deportment so marked by refinement and high-breeding, that the impression he made upon the mind of the fair girl was more lasting than she would have been willing to

admit. Compliments poured in so commonly that Florence, like most belles, heeded them not, or regarded them at best, but as the tribute which beauty and talent exact from all who approach within the circle of their influence: and yet how often did the gentle Florence say—no, reader, *think* (for it was among her most suspicious symptoms that she never *spoke* of Rowly!) that he was the only young man she knew who had never paid her a compliment, and that even by implication he seemed to avoid everything of the sort. Still there were moments in which Florence could not help thinking that he liked to be with her, listening to the music of her voice as she chatted away like a young bird sings, carelessly, but sweetly withal. Was she right? I have a theory of my own which teaches that there should be deep sympathies between those who love: tastes, feelings, thoughts should rise in harmony, and the soul be enabled to hold converse with its kindred soul without the drapery of words to wrap its sentiments. Life is full of *meaning*, yet few read and understand it alike. When two meet, however, who comprehend its mysteries through similar instincts, they readily recognize each other, and there needs no language of the lips to draw them together. The affinities of nature act like mesmerism, and attachments are often felt where acquaintance can scarcely be said to exist; and it was some subtle agency of this sort, perhaps, which had instructed Florence how to interpret the emotions of Ernest Rowly.

Devoted to his profession, pursuing it not only as a means whereby to acquire fortune, but also as a preparative to the more brilliant career of politics, in which it had ever been his intention to embark, Ernest had thought little of love, and far less of matrimony. Society was to him but a relaxation from labor—mental labor, which often unfits man for the lighter occupations of life—so that the refinement he so rarely sought did but the more powerfully operate upon his wearied spirits, when he subjected them to their reviving influence. Florence interested him by the freshness and purity of feeling which he soon perceived her to possess. Her perfect naturalness of manner, and a vein, as he fancied, of noble sentiment, which flowed quietly along under the light frost-work of her conversation, led him in a short time to regard her as something superior to the other young persons of his acquaintance. But as to *love*! the idea had never crossed his mind in connection with his neighbor's pretty daughter. The admiration she received from others never ruffled his composure, for he readily perceived that it made no impression upon herself; and though he often wondered that she was undazzled and unspoiled by its incense, he only thought her the

more superior for her indifference to what would have excited the vanity of most others of her age. But Ernest had never tested his feelings on the subject, he saw her daily from his office window, the same gay, laughing, careless, beautiful creature, and he was perfectly satisfied. One day she asked him, half in jest, to attend the next ball, and, as she did so, her soft, appealing hazel eyes looked so irresistibly attractive that he promised immediately; and hence their meeting on the evening that my story opens.

The slight emotion evinced by Florence when she gave the floral signification of that most beautiful of winter flowers, the *Camilla Japonica*, had quite taken Rowly by surprise, and occasioned the sudden use of her christian name, which so increased her confusion that she unconsciously caught the ribbon that bound her bouquet in such a manner as to loosen its braids, and scatter her exquisitely arranged flowers on the floor of the ball-room. Everybody will remember the feeling with which for the first time she has heard her own name pronounced by the one whom she particularly regarded, and excuse the effect it produced upon my heroine. As the quadrille had just concluded, however, Rowly stooped and gathered the fallen treasures ere he conducted her to a seat. He gazed upon them for a moment somewhat thoughtfully, and then said,

"It is easy to perceive that these are hot-house plants, Miss Moreland, and forced for the occasion. Each has a mystic meaning I observe; and since you have accepted the offering, I would congratulate him who was so fortunate as to select it!"

"Indeed!" replied Florence, in an earnest tone; "indeed, Mr. Rowly I do not know to whose kindness I am indebted for these beautiful flowers. I found several bouquets lying upon the centre-table when I came down this evening, and chose this for its rare loveliness. I never thought of asking where they came from."

"Are such offerings so common then, fair Florence," he inquired, "that you receive them as matters of right?"

"Oh, not of right, but of course," she said, laughing, "are you too, Mr. Rowly, versed in the symbolic language of the East?"

"Let us try the experiment of a conversation," he observed, spreading the rescued flowers on the seat near Florence. "I will begin by offering you this *Mountain Laurel*."

"*Ambition*!" exclaimed she. "Am I to infer that this is your leading trait of character? Well, I have long suspected it!" and she sighed unconsciously.

"Will you not reply?" he asked.

"Yes, here is a sprig of *Hawthorn*, which would whisper '*hope*.'"

"You will perceive that I am, indeed, ambitious," he said, as he now handed her a *Tulip*, whose petals were scarcely unfolded, in spite of the art which had been applied to expand its timid beauties.

She took it in silence, but a deep blush suffused her cheek, and he saw that she understood its sentiment. He waited not for a reply, but presented the much talked of *Japonica*, saying,

"Pray, continue the game, Miss Moreland!"

"Yes, it is quite amusing," faltered out poor Florence, full of confusion, and she handed a piece of *Balm* which had been mixed with the flowers to enrich their odor.

Two portions of the separated bouquet now only remained. The *American Cowslip* and a sprig of '*Arbor Vita*.' Ernest took up the first and presented it, just as one of Florence's pre-engaged partners came to claim her hand for the set now forming for another dance. In the hurry of the moment she returned the *Arbor Vita*, and tripped away to fulfil her engagement.

"As pretty a courtship as I ever witnessed, and as conclusive," drawled out a military exquisite, who was leaning against a column. "But if the fair coquette has any idea of keeping all these Oriental promises, I know little of human nature!"

Rowly turned half angrily toward the speaker, but when he recognized one of Florence's rejected suitors he did not deem the remark worthy of retort. He quietly left the ball-room and sought his lonely office to reflect upon what he thought the folly of his late conduct. He knew that such pastime had become so fashionable among the young of late years, that Florence would have no ground of complaint if he never referred to the subject again: but he knew also that there had been a quiver of the lip, and a tremor in the tones of the usually careless Florence Moreland, which told that the chords of *feeling* and not merely of fancy had vibrated beneath the trial he had made of her skill in the language of flowers. Rowly felt that he had been to blame in thus calling up emotions in another, unless he designed to pursue in a more serious spirit the theme upon which he had jested, and he discovered likewise, reader, while reflecting on the subject, that he was himself deeply attached to the young creature who had so readily sympathized with him. But what was he to do? As unprepared to marry as he was above the paltry vanity which would have found its gratification in the undisguised affection he had excited, he really felt embarrassed by the dilemma in which he stood. At length he decided that Florence should be the arbiter, and went the next day to refer the matter to her judgment. Need I add the result of that visit? Surely your own heart will determine it; but let me mention that on

calling a few days since on Mr. and Mrs. Rowly, I found the bride sitting near the chimney, over which hung, neatly framed, the faded bouquet which had led to all this happiness. I made it the subject of the following stanzas:

How often may a silly game
Betray a purpose deep;
And love which scarcely owned the name,
Be through it roused from sleep!
They met in Fancy's favorite bower,
With hearts as free as air,
Yet Cupid chose that very hour
To fix his arrows there.

A cherished bouquet, torn apart,
The herald he selected,
To fling a spell on either heart,
And thus the plan effected;
The Mountain Laurel was displayed
As his most leading trait,
"Accept the *Hawthorn*," said the maid,
"And *hope* thou'lt yet be great!"

"Nay, nay!" he cried, "*Ambition* springs
To something more than fame;
This *Tulip*, gentle lady, sings
The boon I dare not name;"
She read his meaning in the eyes
Turned fondly to her own;
And took the flower, while sweet surprise
Upon her flushed cheek shone.

The fair *Camilla* next he gave,
"My destiny I place
Within thy hands—oh, lady, save
My hopes from dark disgrace!"
She spoke not to his pleading look,
But turned her blushing cheek
As from the scattered sprigs she took
The Balm, which *thus* might speak.

"If truth be thine—if manly faith
Within thy bosom glows,
This simple herb a meaning hath,
And *sympathy* bestows!"
He seized the herb—the hand so fair
He pressed within his own;
Then placed the tell-tale *Cowslip* there,
And said in Love's low tone,

"*One* more, but one, before we close
This game to me so dear,
A hyacinth, a pink or rose,
One more, my lady fair!"
She gazed a moment half afraid
Their sentiments to see,
This *Arbor Vita* said the maid,
Means, "*You must live for me.*"

The tale was told—the game was o'er,
Love's secret all was known;
They met as they ne'er met before,
For each a prize had drawn;
They met, and soon a bridal wreath
Adorned the lady's brow,
While love glowed on the cheek beneath,
And laugh's upon it now.

inhabited by many of the stout yeomen who belonged to the queen dowagers' domain. In a hut which stood on the outskirts of this hamlet lived a lone woman who seemed of a better class than her neighbors, and who had resided in the domain long before the death of King Edward, when her husband had been appointed head forester on the estate, now a favorite residence of his dowager queen.

This woman had been some months a widow, but still she inhabited the old dwelling and subsisted on a small pension awarded to her by some noble family whom she had served in her maiden days.

It was deep in the evening, the widow had raked together the embers on her rude hearth and was about to extinguish the rush light which glimmered in its iron socket against the chimney when the hoof tread of a horse, half muffled by the rich forest sward which lay unbroken all around her dwelling, arrested her hand. It was a lonesome place, and the good woman listened to this unusual sound somewhat nervously. It approached close to the door, and the heavy breathing of the animal came to her ears as she listened. Directly a light knock was heard, and a voice that made the good woman's heart leap, demanded admittance. She sprang to the door, opened it, stretched forth her arms and started back almost with a shriek. The voice had deceived her. It was a youth glittering with gold lace, and with ostrich plumes streaming from his cap, whom she had almost taken to her bosom.

"And so you will not let me in," said the boy with a low silvery laugh, shaking back the plumes from his face. "Yet in sooth I am both tired and hungry."

"Clara, my child, my own sweet child!" cried the widow.

She forgot the boy's dress—the time of night—everything in the dear sound of that voice.

"Oh! it is joy to feel thee here again," she murmured between the warm kisses which she rained over that young face as it lay pressed upon her bosom, "but how is this, girl, how is this?—what masking mummery is this?" continued the good dame, holding the girl out at arms length, while a half smile struggled with a frown on her face as she examined the masculine dress in which her darling had appeared.

"This male gear! the dagger—and now that I can see, this pale face too—what does it all beseem?"

"Let me close the door, mother, and I will tell you all," said the young girl, taking off her cap while a serious expression replaced the momentary joy that had lighted up her face; "but first have you any room for the horse yonder, or

food for myself?—we have come from the castle since nightfall, and are both tired and hungry."

"Enough of both—enough of both," cried the widow, and going up to a loft she brought down a measure of corn and carried it out to the horse, while the weary young traveller sunk to a wooden stool which stood near the fire-place, and leaning her head against the rough stones, sat with half closed eye-lids too thoroughly fatigued even for an effort at connected thought.

The widow saw the state of utter exhaustion which had overcome her child, and with the ready task of affection stifled any curiosity which her strange apparel had excited, while she busied herself in preparing food for the half famished young creature. The bed of glowing embers was raked open again: a slice of venison soon lay boiling upon them, and hastily kneaded cakes were slowly browning on the neatly swept hearth. While the widow was placing trenchers and a cup of ale on the little deal table where the repast was to be served, Clara had dropped into a deep slumber, and it was with some difficulty that she was aroused to partake of the humble fare when it was at length ready.

Food and the slight rest which she had found restored the young girl in some degree to her usual energies, and when the meal was over the two females drew their stools together on the hearth, and Clara related all the events which had transpired at the castle since morning.

The widow heard her out, only now and then interrupting her to ask some brief question, and when all was told she informed her visitor that she too had received a communication from the queen dowager. That a person from the castle had been to the hamlet several times questioning inquisitively regarding Clara's birth and parentage.

"And what reply did you give?" enquired Clara, looking earnestly in the face of her companion, which instantly changed almost to a look of affright in the dim rush light.

"What reply did you give?"

"What could I give save that thou wert my own dear child?"

"And *am* I your child, mother? *am* I?"

Clara's face grew almost solemn in its expression as she spoke, and her small hand was pressed hard upon the shriveled fingers that had unconsciously grasped hers.

"Why dost thou question me thus, girl? Who has dared to fill thy mind with such doubts? Have I not acted a mother's part?—have I not been kind, loving?"

"All this—nay, more, have you been to me, a mother in act, in affection, but yet forgive me—forgive me, but another gave me birth—I know that another gave me birth!"

Clara flung her arms around the bowed neck of her companion as she spoke and tried to kiss her face, but the poor woman covered her convulsed features with both hands, and emotion seemed shaking her.

"Forgive, oh, forgive me!" cried the young girl, falling on her knees before the only parent she had ever known—"I did not expect this—forget what I have said—forget it, I beseech you. I meant not thus to distress you my kind friend—nay, more than mother."

For a few moments the widow also sat bowed forward on her chair, with both hands pressed upon her face, motionless as a statue: the young girl knelt before her greatly agitated and weeping like a child.

"Look at me, mother—look at me!" she said; lifting her hands, and with gentle force removing those which concealed the face of dame Alice. "Look upon me kindly once more, and I will never think of these things again!"

"And who put such thoughts in thy young head, child?" said Alice, bending her troubled face to that of the young creature kneeling before her. "The secret was known to but one—the dead and the Almighty."

"And *he* it was," replied Clara, lifting her tearful eyes to heaven—"he it was that left the vague dream in my heart, that dim, strange memory of the past which has haunted me ever since I had a thought."

"That dream! What is the thought?—this wild, wayward thought, my Clara," placing a hand to her forehead.

"I will tell you all," cried Clara, "as clearly as it has ever appeared to my own heart. It is my first recollection, a misty vagueness hangs over it like a half forgotten dream. It was a large room, like one I have often seen at the castle. There was tapestry on the walls where grim knights and strange looking bodies seemed frowning upon me as I gazed in fear upon them. The light came dimly through windows muffled deep with velvet, and a great square bed stood in one corner with dark plumes nodding over it, and hangings that looked like a heavy pall sweeping down from the ceiling. On the bed lay a form white and still as I have seen marble figures on a tomb—still it was more solemnly beautiful than marble ever was, and hair of inky blackness lay parted from the cold forehead. You took me in your arms, you!—but there was no wrinkles on your cheek at that time, mother, but tears, and this hair had no gray threads in it then. We were alone. Others had been in the room, but you sent them away—your arms trembled as you held me over that dark couch and told me to look on *my mother*. I laughed

and struggled in your arms, for rings, more than one, flashed like fire on the pale hands folded over the bosom of that motionless form. The rings delighted me, they sparkled so amid the dark drapery around. I snatched at them with my hands—I touched only those cold, stiff fingers and clung back to your bosom shrieking with fear. I remember then you kissed my brow, pressed my face to your bosom, and hushed my grief with words that were broken with sobs, and all the time big tears were streaming down your cheeks and falling on my hair and neck as they do now. Then you knelt down by the couch, clasped an arm around me, and burying your face in the pile of black velvet, sobbed and murmured words that I could not understand. "I was afraid then, for that pale, dead face lay on the pillow close by me, and I could not breathe. At length you took me up in your arms again, the tears had left your eyes, and the soft, low words that fell from your lips quieted me. You whispered me not to be afraid of the cold, and held my face down to the beautiful dead, while trembling, and with one arm around your neck, I bent my lips to that white, still mouth, and kissed my mother.

"You took me away then I do not know whither, but that one scene was buried deep in my young mind. That sweet face in its dead, pale loveliness has been forever with me in my dreams at night time, and that sweet word 'mother' comes to me like a breath of music whenever I am sad, or sit alone in the dim twilight. I have never mentioned these thoughts before, they seemed to me as a beautiful fragment of some earlier and more splendid world which might find its counterpart in the future. It was a bud from some bright wreath which might be united to its sweet companions again. So I buried my dream like music deep in my heart, for it seemed as if a thought of it breathed aloud might sweep the whole away forever.

"For a long time all this really seemed to me a fantasy, an infant's vision sent to haunt me here in the dim old forest, for my home was with you I called you mother—the kind, departed father I loved you as a child—a real child—but the idea which hovered around me was that beautiful dead form, she was the mother of my heart."

As Clara spoke her cheek lighted, and her soft eyes sparkled through the tears that filled them. She paused a moment, buried her head in the lap of her companion, and drew a deep breath. When she lifted her face again it was rosy with an unusual blush.

"Mother," she said, "I have found my world of which this memory was but the fragment. That hidden breath of music is pervading my whole heart, awakening its memories and deepening

them into a solemn conviction. I have been living with the highest of the land, amid pomp and regal splendor. Yet all this seems but my natural destiny—my heart is with you, mother, but the castle yonder seems that which I was born—I stand amid these people of lofty birth, and my heart beats as proudly as theirs—I am beloved by one of their own class. I, the waiting woman, and oh, how deeply I love him in return, not as one of low degree would love a superior, but as an equal—and I *am* his equal! Were it not so, could I love thus proudly? could a mere waiting woman receive such homage as if it were her inheritance? Mother, tell me, was I not born among the nobles of this land—am I not a fitting bride for the Marquis of Dorset?"

"Alas, how could I dream that the young falcon would perch among kites and not feel the fire of its nature," muttered Alice, with her eyes fixed steadily on the hearth.

"Speak, speak, mother, my heart is trembling for your answer," cried Clara, clasping her hands.

"I have a promise in heaven against it, girl," replied the old woman almost sternly, "but mark this! The son of Elizabeth Woodville is no fitting husband for thee."

A look of keen disappointment came over Clara's features, she wove her fingers convulsively together, and said in a low, broken voice.

"It is then all a dream—and I a low farm peasant girl?—oh, why did these proud, vain thoughts ever enter my heart, why did I ever think of him?"

"They were not proud thoughts," cried Alice with kindling eyes.

"Not proud, mother," replied Clara, suddenly falling on her knees again, "oh, tell me the truth! do not trifle with me."

"Not proud, but vain, Clara, there you spoke sooth. His mother was the bitter enemy of yours, but ask no more. The Great God who overlooketh all things have thee in his keeping, my child, and now stretch thyself on the pallet yonder. Tomorrow go forth to the high mission for which thou hast been chosen."

"Nay, mother, do not dismiss me to rest troubled with these vague doubts," cried Clara, imploringly.

"The time is not come, my child—be patient and learn to suffer, for suffering is the destiny of thy sex, it was her destiny, and she was patient. Go to thy rest, child, the blessed virgin be with thee."

With these words Alice extinguished the rush light, and kneeling down by one of the humble pallet beds that stood in the room, seemed to be lost in earnest prayer, while Clara flung herself

on that pointed out for her, and notwithstanding the anxiety that preyed on her mind, was soon lost in deep and refreshing slumber.

CHAPTER V.

AFTER a weary journey of many days, our young adventuress found herself on an eminence which overlooked the plain on which the Lancastrian prince had encamped his army. For a moment she checked her horse, bewildered and filled with misgivings. Everything bespoke the eve of an engagement—stir and bustle, and the din of preparation was visible throughout the encampment. Officers were moving from all sides to a large tent near the centre of the encampment, whence a snow white banner with the red rose glowing on its folds, streamed proudly to the wind. To the right was another encampment, which she at first mistook for a larger division of Richmond's army, but a gorgeous tent rising, a mass of crimson and gold among the thousands that surrounded it, with the royal arms emblazoned over the entrance, and a banner bearing the white rose flaunting in the sunset, proclaimed even to her inexperienced eye the presence of royalty.

Richard himself was in the field prompt, stern and vigilant. The warrior had met his enemy, and the two enemies lay close together waiting only for the dawn of that day which was to decide their destiny.

Far away on the verge of the plain lay another division inactive, apparently keeping aloof from both armies. Clara could not discern the badges worn by soldiers so far distant, but readily conjectured that this division was under the command of Lord Stanley, the person whose co-operation was so important to both parties.

Excited by the same eagerness to accomplish her mission before it was too late, and yet terrified by the strange forms around her, Clara rode swiftly toward the first sentinel in sight, and demanded to be brought before the Earl of Richmond.

The Lancastrian Prince was in his tent, surrounded by the officers of his army, calm and self-possessed as if no great event were on the verge of its completion. His dark eye shone clear, calm and coldly on all. His thin lips never, for an instant, lost their firm expression; no frown lowered upon his handsome features; no smile, even for an instant, enlivened them. With the immovable self-possession of a war tried commander, stood this young man on the eve of his first battle, distributing orders, receiving reports, and dismissing his friends to their various posts with the haughty politeness of a victorious monarch with the crown already on his brow—not as the poor adventurer, which

he was, dependant on the men who surrounded him almost for the sword he wore.

The sentinel had left her at the entrance of the tent, and Clara was compelled to make her way through the crowd of officers that filled it. She shrunk trembling into the first obscure corner, and waited with anxiety and impatience an opportunity to address the prince.

"Has Lord Stanley come in yet?" enquired Richmond of an officer to whom he had been speaking.

"He is within three leagues, encamped, and doubtless determined to remain inactive. Richard has possession of his son George."

"And for a boy's life a kingdom may be lost to us!" rejoined the earl with a slight tinge of bitterness in his tone—"but Dorset—he must be near at hand?"

"His master of horse is lying, even now, at a village near Stanley's division; but it is rumored that Dorset was seen in London at Richard's court not many days ago."

Richmond lifted his eyes quickly, and a slight smile stole over his lip.

"He has no son to plead in excuse for treachery. Dorset false and Stanley wavering," he muttered gloomily—"what say you, my lords, will it be prudent to offer battle under these prospects?"

"If this were all," said the officer who had just spoken, "the odds against us would not be so great, but it is said that the queen dowager has deserted our cause, that she has consented to Richard's union with the Princess Elizabeth."

Richmond interrupted the speaker with a bitter exclamation—his eyes burned as if a fire were smouldering in the black depths, and his thin lips grew white with rage. "By St. George, it is all explained," he said. "This treacherous woman has sold her weak daughter to the highest bidder. But Dorset, Dorset—I did not deem him so base."

"He is *not* base! There is not a warrior here who would dare call him so were Dorset by to defend his own honor," and with these words a page, whom no one had seen enter, stepped forth from a dark corner of the tent and stood trembling with mingled anger and affright before the haughty Lancastrian Prince.

The prince turned sharply round, and after scanning the slight figure before him with a cold glance, turned to the officer again.

"Dorset has found a doughty champion," he said with a freezing smile. "Have a care my lord!"

Clara shrunk back, abashed by the wondering eyes turned upon her, she forgot her disguise, her errand, everything but the annoyance of the scrutiny, and for a moment was tempted to flee

from the tent. The color came and went on her cheek, and tears of vexation started to her eyes, she drew the queen's package from her bosom, cast a hurried glance over the lords and officers that filled the tent, and drawing close to the earl held forth the queen's signet ring.

"Your highness will recognize by this whose messenger I am," she said, with retiring self-possession. "What I have to say is for your private ear."

Richmond took the signet, held it to the light, and examined it closely.

"It is from the queen dowager," he said at length, looking at the officer who had brought him news of Dorset.

"This boy may have better tidings from our allies than yours, my lord," and without further comment the earl lifted a curtain which formed another compartment of his tent, and motioned the page to follow him.

"We are alone," he said before the drapery had swept back to its place again—"now give me thy tidings—but first is Dorset near?"

"My lord Dorset is in London, or was when tidings of him reached us a few days since at the castle. The—"

The young messenger broke off in her speech terrified by the dark, vengeful expression that gathered over the face of her listener.

"It is true, then," he muttered, "that artful woman, her fickle daughter, and still more fickle son—all alike false. They forsake me now when the tyrant is on my last footstep."

"My lord," cried Clara, while her cheek kindled, and her eyes flashed once more—"you are wronging the most gentle lady, and the bravest knights in all England. The Princess Elizabeth remains true to her faith as the blossom to its sunshine—you have no adherent more staunch and earnest in your cause than Dorset, had it been otherwise I had not braved the peril of a long journey and this noisy camp in your service! The marquis was taken up to London a prisoner by the king himself."

"Ha, can this be true? Has Richard been with the dowager in person?" exclaimed the earl.

"This package, intrusted to me by the queen herself, will explain all," replied Clara, holding forth the parcel which she still held in her hand.

The earl took the package, tore away the floss that confined it, and going to a lamp read the several letters entirely through before he spoke another word. Clara watched his face as he read. She saw his lips, which at first were pressed hard together, relax into a smile of scornful triumph, she could see that his eyes were burning under their drooping lids, and when he looked up an expression of stern exultation lighted up

his usually immovable features. He remained several moments holding the documents in his hand, as if pondering some important idea in his mind, then hastily flinging up the curtain he went out, called the officer who seemed to be most in his confidence, and Clara could hear them conversing together in low, eager voice for several minutes close by the curtain while she stood in suspense on the other side.

After a few minutes Richmond returned followed by the officer, and come close up to where she was standing.

"Thou hast done us a service, boy," he said, feeling for his purse—"a great service, and the reward should be in proportion, but—"

"Nay, my lord, I want not gold, the service, if any has been rendered, was done for my master."

Richmond put back the purse with a well satisfied smile; for even at that early age the avarice which proved a leading fault in Henry the Seventh was becoming a blemish with the adventurer.

"There is yet another important service which none can perform so well as thyself, fair page. Being in the queen's livery and possessed of her signet, Stanley can never doubt the authority of thy errand. In this package are two letters, one to Dorset's master of horse, commanding him to place himself under Stanley's banner: here is another in the queen's hand writing, ordering Stanley to join his forces with those of our enemy. This letter we may keep for future use. Take the other and deliver it to the master of horse as directed—take also the queen's signet to my Lord Stanley, with a letter which I will write forthwith. He believes us still true allies, nothing is more natural than that her signet should give authority to my despatches. Let him join us after the engagement commences to-morrow, and Richard shall hardly be given time enough to cut off his son George's head as he threatens. He may find it difficult to defend his own! What say you, my lord?"

"That Stanley *must* be won to our side," replied the officer to whom Richmond's previous speech had been addressed. "The serpent queen might have lost us a kingdom but for this brave page, she must be foiled with her own weapons now—we can but render guile for treachery, but we have no time to lose, your highness. While you prepare the despatch I will order an escort for the boy."

"See to it at once," replied Richmond, seating himself at a table and beginning to write—as the officer passed Clara he paused and laid his hand kindly on her shoulder.

"Thou art a brave child," he said with considerable feeling—"and this night may win a kingdom for its rightful sovereign—no mean

exploit for a stripling scarcely entered into his teens! But thou art pale, boy, and seem weary. Bear up a little and I will send thee some bread and a cup of wine." With these grateful words the officer went out, turning back to smile on the page as he closed the curtain.

Clara was indeed pale, overcome with fatigue and protracted excitement, her heart sunk within her as she thought of the task yet to be performed. But thoughts of her lover, of her young mistress, and the terrible fate that threatened them both were busy with her heart. She saw how necessary her further co-operation was to the Lancasterian Prince, for the two armies were so nearly equal in their strength that Stanley held the power in his own hand which would secure victory to the side he should at last espouse.

Clara could hardly stand from fatigue, but after she had eaten the crust of bread and drank of the wine which was brought her, all the energies of her mind and body returned, and when the earl had finished his despatch she stood before him with a resolute mien, and ready to perform his behest to the utmost.

"Take this, be prudent and faithful," said Richmond, as he took up the documents which he wished to transmit, and bound them together, "and hold this in pledge of my promise. If the battle of to-morrow wins back our birth-right there is no wish which a subject may claim of his sovereign which this ring shall not win for you."

Clara took the ring which the earl drew from his little finger as he spoke, and placing the package in her bosom, followed the officer who had returned to conduct her to the escort which had been prepared.

CHAPTER VI.

"The trumpet pealed its joyful cry,
The coal black war horse neighed;
The glittering banner floated high,
With hearts of steel and burning eye,
Each warrior drew his blade."

It was midnight when Clara reached the encampment of Lord Stanley. The earl was still up and in his tent, filled with anxieties, irresolute and gloomy. His son was in Richard's power—his youngest born and favorite child. He had heard nothing from the queen dowager, and Dorset was still absent on the eve of a momentous battle. How was he to act? Redeem his pledge with Richmond and thus seal the death of his own child—or violate his faith, turn traitor to his word and sustain the reigning monarch whom he both feared and hated? The difficulties which beset him seemed to be inextricable, and while his followers were sunk in

repose he remained alone in his tent wakeful and undecided.

He started up, a noise at the entrance of his tent had aroused him, the queen's name was mentioned. It might be some messenger with tidings that would decide his course of action. As he stood gazing on the entrance of the tent it was darkened by the figure of a young boy in the queen's livery. With a look of eager delight the earl went forward to receive the welcome messenger, he took the despatches, glanced hastily at the seal, and without stopping even to greet the page, sat down and began to read.

"It needs but caution—the prince is right—it needs but caution and all may be well," he exclaimed, and fell to perusing Richmond's letter again with increasing earnestness.

"Thou hast had a hard ride my poor lad," he said at last, turning to the page who had been standing unnoticed by the entrance—"beyond that curtain is food and wine, with such accommodations for rest as a camp affords. Seek both while there is opportunity, in a few hours none of us will have time for rest."

Clara hesitated a moment, remembered her disguise, and lifting the curtain crept to a dark corner of the outer tent. She wrapped herself in a soldier's cloak she found there, and, spite of her strange situation, was soon asleep.

When Clara awoke it was deep in the morning, and she was alone in Lord Stanley's tent. She arose from the ground, tottered feebly toward the opening and looked out—the camp was deserted, and a little distance off she saw Stanley's division filing across the plain with flaunting banners and music sounding a war-like challenge to the breeze. A sound of strife—the hot din of battle came to her ear from the distance. It drew nearer and nearer, she could hear the war horses charging. The noise of arrows whirring through the air on their errands of death, the clash of spears and the ringing sound of sword and pike battering against stout armor, with the crash of battle-axes cleaving through many a brazen helmet, mingled fearfully with the shrieks of wounded horses and of dying men. All these terrible sounds swept by Clara as she stood trembling in the deserted camp, and making a feeble attempt to muffle her head in the soldier's cloak, and thus shut out the appalling sounds.

Hour after hour she sat crouching in a corner of the tent, with the sound of battle raging in her ears. There was no pause, not a moment's rest to the combatants—a shout, a sharp, brief shout rent the air for an instant, and then the strife seemed to grow still fiercer than before. It was a cry of joy sent up by Richmond's partisans when Lord Stanley wheeled his division into

their lines—another hour and the battle raged on. Then, all at once, a shout tore its way to the very heavens—it was a victorious cry sent ringing up from the throats of a whole army.

"Richmond and St. George! Long live King Henry the Seventh! Long live the King!"

Again, again, and again the shout went thundering by increasing in force and volume each time. The young girl heard it, her heart leaped and her frame quivered. She rushed from the tent clapping her small hands and joining her silvery shout of long live King Henry! with the billowy sounds that went surging by.

She looked forth over the plain, everything was tumult there, horses, bowmen, spears and battle-axes mingled together in a bright and glittering mass: an ocean of human beings seemed heaving and swelling in great waves across the plain. As she gazed a group of horsemen came out in front, warriors all with glittering armor and plumes dancing to the wind. There was a knight in their midst, around whom the warriors centered, the plumes of his helmet were snow white, and the long mane of his war charger, as it streamed in the wind, was of the same spotless color. As Clara gazed upon the warrior his helmet was lifted and he bent forward upon his horse. When his head was raised again the sunlight blazed over the jewels of a crown, and once more the air was torn with a shout of "Long live King Henry! Long live the King!"

When the battle was over and the victory won, Lord Stanley remembered the page who had been left asleep in his tent, and sent an escort to conduct him on his way back to the queen. It was night-fall when the disguised girl rode across the battle-field still covered with the dead and dying. Fragments of broken armor, spent arrows and broken spears lay thickly along the ground and gleamed with horrible brightness along the trampled earth as the moon came out and smiled down on the fearful scene. Sickened with the appalling scene which surrounded her, the poor girl closed her eyes and rode on with her escort, suffering her horse to pick his way over the field of carnage. All at once the horse paused and seemed gathering himself up for a leap over some object that lay in his path, Clara drew the bridle and looked down. A dead war horse lay on the earth before her—a human form lay across it with the head hanging over its back and almost touching the ground. The helmet had been beaten from his head and lay with its broken plume crushed nearly in the earth. As she gazed the moon came suddenly from behind a cloud and lay full on the ghastly face of the dead man. Clara recognized with a shudder the features of King Richard the Third.

THE LADIES'

CLARA.

BY MRS. ANN S. STEPHENS.

CHAPTER V.

Still the disguised girl sat upon her horse, as it were, fascinated by the horrid object at his feet. The armor was hacked and broken around the breast, where a sword wound had let forth the heart's blood of the fallen monarch in a stream which stained the snowy back of the horse, flowed down and congealed in a crimson pool beneath his head. It had thickened around a mass of black hair which flowed downward from the naked forehead, leaving the whole face distorted and ghastly in the moonlight. The eyes were rolled back and stiffened in the sockets. The double teeth were clenched and glistening between the parted lips. One arm lay crushed beneath his form, while the other hand was entangled in the mane of the dead beast, still clenching the fragment of a broken sword in its rigid grasp. The diamond hilt clutched in that red hand, the shivered steel and the golden studs that enclosed his battered armor lay gleaming in the moonbeams till the whole body seemed touched with a faint blaze of fire.

Pale and trembling with horror, Clara turned her horse from the fallen monarch just as a party of Lancastrian soldiers came up. They recognized the face with a coarse shout, and began to tear away the rich armor and the jewels that lay around the dead, wrangling among themselves over the booty as it was wrenched away from the body. When all that was valuable had been appropriated, they flung the dead monarch brutally across a horse and bore him from the field shouting, "Thus falls the house of York. Away with the last Plantagenet." TO BE CONCLUDED.



THE queen dowager had scarcely received news of the battle of Bosworth-field when she resolved to set forth for London, accompanied by the Princess Elizabeth, and there await the approach of the new king. Clara, who had rested but one day after her perilous journey, was hastily summoned from the cottage of dame Alice to attend her young mistress. The good dame insisted upon accompanying her child to the castle, and, once within its walls, contrived to ingratiate herself so completely into favor with the gentle princess that she was enrolled among her personal attendants, and then taken with a portion of the household up to London.

During the absence of her favorite attendant, Elizabeth of York had been informed of the compact existing between her mother and the late King Richard. For once the haughty queen found her usually submissive and timid daughter firm and even resentful. She had for several years been the betrothed wife of Henry of Lancaster, she had seen him once, only once, when she was a prisoner at Sherriff Hutton, and he came in disguise from the fastnesses of Wales to obtain a glance of his future bride. The romance of this adventure—the danger he had braved to obtain the single interview, combined with the personal qualities of the prince, had aroused the imagination and enlisted the gentle feelings of the noble maiden so thoroughly, that her pure nature recoiled from the proposed union with her uncle, with even deeper horror than she would have felt from a knowledge of his consanguinity alone. Solitude and sorrow had nurtured the romantic attachment, which she had formed for Richmond during their single interview at Sherriff Hutton, into a deep and abiding passion—a passion that gave her strength to resist the will of her ambitious mother. Henry of Lancaster had been the first image impressed on the snow of her maiden heart, and with the impulse of a sweet and stainless nature, she felt that any proposal to wed her with another was almost sacrilege, and resolutely refused all participation in the unholy plot which was to consign her to a life of legalized guilt with her own uncle. She knew that Richmond was in England—that many nobles of the land were flocking to his standard, that Richard was in the field to oppose him, and she waited almost in a state of desperation the result of a contest which was to settle her destiny forever.

The tidings came. He was victorious. Richard

the bold warrior, the subtle statesman, the imperious monarch, lay in the market place of Leicester, disrobed and mutilated for the rabble to gaze upon and jeer at. He was her father's brother, and in many things had been kind to her—she could not hear of this horrible overthrow without feelings of sadness and regret. She was all a woman, sweet and gentle, but the Plantagenet blood kindled in her veins as she thought of this wanton degradation to her race, and for a moment resentment and sorrow conquered the softer emotions of her nature.

Then came thoughts of Henry—how grateful she was that he had saved her from a detested union with the fallen monarch! Gratitude, pride, love, all arose in her heart, and drove out the images of horror that had been there but a moment before.

With all these exulting and joyous feelings thrilling her young heart, the princess set forth to witness the triumphant entrance of her lord and king, who was now upon his march from Leicester to London.

Far different were the feelings of the dowager queen. With her everything was gloomy and uncertain. She knew that Lord Stanley had turned the tide of war in favor of the Lancastrian Prince. Had those dangerous papers ever reached his hands? Or, in defiance of them, had he abandoned Richard, and thus given the victory to his rival? If the papers had not reached their destination what would be the result? Her messenger might be taken or slain, and the documents thus fall into the hands of King Henry. She drove away the thought, for it made her tremble on the snow white horse which bore her so proudly through the streets of London.

Those who saw her pass, surrounded by a cavalcade of retainers, and glittering in all the pomp and parade of high station, little dreamed of the restless anxiety and terrible foreboding which gnawed at her heart.

She took up her abode in one of the royal palaces where but a few short years before she had reigned a queen, and there awaited the coming of a man who held her destiny in his hands.

It was a day of rejoicing throughout London—the streets were alive and tumultuous with human beings. Warehouses were closed, the casements of almost every dwelling in the city were flung open and filled through all the leading thoroughfares with smiling faces. King Henry the Seventh was nearing the city in his triumphal march from Bosworth-field. He was close at hand, and even then his victorious army was pouring its glittering files into the suburbs.

In the centre of his army, but in a close chariot

which concealed him from view, the Lancastrian monarch entered his capital. Around the carriage, so close that the six coal black steeds that drew it were often fretted by the crowd, rode an immense cavalcade of lords and knights. The war steeds that had borne them in battle moved forward, breast to breast, in deep files, champing their bits and restive under the restraint imposed on them by the slow progress of the king. Never had conqueror a body guard more noble in blood or arrayed more gorgeously. Each high born warrior had donned his choicest armor, plumes of every hue danced lightly in the air—jewels and golden studs, and chain work of glittering steel burned in the sunbeams, housings of crimson and golden cloth swept the pavement with their magnificent fringes, and banners with their silken folds now stained and spotted, streamed over them all. As the hoofs of his vanguard smote the pavement a thousand clarions poured their voices on the air. The city bells sent a crash of music from their iron tongues, and from every lane and street of the great city one clear and mighty shout swelled upward to the sky.

The palaces of the nobility were all flung open, the Yorkists, from fear of future vengeance, the Lancastrians in triumph at the retiring power of their faction. Tanks of wine were set flowing at the portals—the balconies were laced with rich stuffs and crowded with noble ladies, and all along where the houses formed a barrier to the intercourse, battalions came swelling down the principal streets a stream of martial life. Casements were flung open and crowded with eager faces—the roof tops were covered with people shouting and flinging up their caps, or bending over the eaves to see the human throng go flashing file after file through the streets below. Whenever the chariot of the king appeared, the joyful tumult reigned still more loudly. Red rose banners streamed from the chimnies and flashed in many a silken wave from the casements. White hands waved like flocks of snowy birds about to take flight from the balconies, and many an embroidered scarf went fluttering down to the cavalcade of lords and knights that surrounded the new monarch in his progress.

There was but one palace, by which the pageant was likely to pass, where the pale-rose of York was exhibited overtopping the ensanguined badge of Lancaster. In a dim apartment of that palace the dowager queen of Edward the Fourth listened to the stormy joy that proclaimed the downfall of her husband's house. Now and then as a distant shout came thundering through the air, she would pause in her agitated walk up and down the spacious chamber, fold her arms more tightly over her bosom and move toward a remote part of the

room. Every human being in the palace seemed happy but herself. Retainers and servants in livery crowded the ante-rooms with happy faces. There a group of waiting women stood gossiping at an open casement—in another place half a dozen pages were expressing their eagerness to join the pageant, and several ladies of her own house occupied an adjoining room talking over late events with eager and graceful carelessness.

The Lady Elizabeth was in the room with her mother anxious and restless also—but oh, from what different feelings! A tumult of blissful sensations swelled higher and higher in her young heart as every shout from the populace swept past her. She had chosen a seat within the purple shades flung through the drapery of a neighboring window; timidly seeking to conceal, within their rich gloom, the flush that came and went on her cheek, and the exultation revelling in the violet depths of her eyes, which the silken lashes drooping over them had power to subdue but not conceal. As she listened, the happy feelings broke up too blissfully from that full heart, and tears broke into her eyes, pleasant drops such as flash up from a pure soul when the angel of joy has troubled its waters. She strove to force them back, but they only broke in a bright dew over the thick lashes that would have dispelled them. Others started up, so covering her face with both hands, the gentle girl wept quietly and still, as only the good and happy can weep.

There was a pleasant moisture stealing into Clara's eyes as she witnessed this feminine agitation in her mistress from the recess of a window near by, where she had been stationed, by the queen's order, with a basket of roses on her arm in readiness to shower them upon the new monarch when he should pass before the palace.

With a touch of delicate sympathy, the young girl took a couple of the blossoms from the basket, and weaving the stems together till the snowy leaves of the white rose took a blush from the blood-red petals of the other, she stole gently to the feet of her mistress, and bending on one knee, laid the fragrant buds in her lap.

Elizabeth removed her hands; a bright smile flashed through the blushes on her face like sunshine darting over the crimson west. She took up the flowers, touched the red one to her scarcely less crimson lips, and then laid them both together on her bosom, murmuring softly,

"How sweetly the colors blend. They might have grown together—it was a happy thought, my good Clara."

Before Clara could do more than press her lips to the folds of her lady's robe there arose some increasing tumult around the palace, a blast of trumpets swept down the street, and the heavy

tramp of cavalry sounded up from the pavement, while shout upon shout of "Long live King Henry—long live the king!" now and then swept every other sound away in its deafening roar.

The queen was at a distant end of the apartment, but she turned quickly, flung the heavy ringlets aside from her ear—listened a moment and then moved toward the window. After walking a few paces forward she paused again, folded her arms with an impatient motion over the diamond stomacher that never covered a more anxious bosom, and remained fast in bitter thought, beating the jewelled fingers of one hand against the wrist of the other, and with her eyes fixed hard upon the floor.

"Our lady of York!—The white rose, the white and red!—Long live King Henry and the Lady Elizabeth!"

This heart stirring cry arose from the populace below, who had caught sight of an immense banner emblazoned with the royal arms of England, and with the paler rose gleaming on its crimson ground, which was just then flaunted over an upper balcony in front of the palace. The balcony, though gorgeous with hangings of blue and gold, had been empty all the morning. The flaunting of the banner was taken as a herald that the royal ladies within would present themselves before the people, and publicly honor the new king. Thus arose the shout which for the first time mingled the names of Henry of Lancaster and Elizabeth of York in the joyous cry of the day.

The Lady Elizabeth heard it, started from her chair, clasped both hands and pressing them over her heart, fell back to her seat with a short blissful gasp, and shivering with joy.

The queen lifted her head; an exulting smile flashed over her face. She uttered a broken exclamation, and moved toward the window with an imperious tread, and the rich velvet of her train sweeping up the rushes along the floor as she passed.

"Up, maiden, out upon the balcony!" she cried, waving her hand to Clara.

Clara sprang forward, lifted the masses of drapery from before the window, and held it back for the queen to pass through.

"Come, Elizabeth, quick, quick! Let the people see their future queen!"

The sensitive girl shrunk back.

"Mother, oh, mother, would it be maidenly thus to court his notice?" she said.

"Folly, girl—it is for the people—they are Yorkists at heart yet."

With these words the imperious queen drew the Lady Elizabeth's arm through her own, and led her almost by force out upon the balcony.

The moment the princess appeared, leaning on the arm of her queenly mother, a gust of wind sent the banner streaming in massy folds far over their heads, a sea of eager faces was uplifted toward them, and once more the cry of "Long live King Henry!—Henry of Lancaster and Elizabeth of York," rang up from the enthusiastic crowd. It ran like lightning along the military lines—the noblemen and knights around the king took it up, they thundered it back to the populace, and it rose in one simultaneous shout from every part of the city.

Never did music ring over the heart of human being with such sweetness as this deafening shout fell upon the ear of the dowager queen, and her eye kindled, and her fine form erected itself proudly. Waving one white hand gracefully the princess made a faint effort to acknowledge the deafening welcome bestowed on her by the populace. But the overwhelming sounds that filled the air—the sea of human faces uplifted from below, and terror at her own conspicuous position, completely overcome her strength, and, spite of her mother's remonstrance, she shrunk back and half concealed herself among the ladies of her household, who, by this time, filled the balcony.

But the queen dowager kept her place. She had been accustomed to brave the public eye, and received its present homage with right royal self-possession. The great banner of her husband swept its massive folds overhead; one moment enveloping her magnificent person in its tinted shadow, then lifting with the wind till a deluge of sunshine was let in upon her golden tresses, her jeweled bosom, and her robe of purple velvet that fell in heavy folds down her person, and lay in glowing masses around her feet. The beauty which had won her the heart of King Edward was scarcely touched by time, and now when it was lighted up with proud excitement, when she bent her flushing eyes on the populace at her feet, it was no wonder that she divided the public attention even with the king himself.

As the king's chariot came opposite the palace, the shouts that had connected him with the family of York became still more vociferous, and when it was just beneath her, the queen took a handful of roses from the basket which Clara held, bent over the railing with eager grace, and cast them down—but no hand was put forth, no courteous smile acknowledged the tasteful greeting. The chariot, in which Henry the Seventh rode, was completely closed, and the shower of blossoms fell neglected upon the top—another mass of blossoms was in the queen's hand, but she crushed them suddenly in her fingers, the indignant blood rushed over her face, and she turned with a haughty gesture as if to leave the balcony. But

the hearty shout which greeted her from the populace, the waving helmets and smiling faces uplifted toward her from the cavalcade of noblemen, who seemed thus anxious to atone for the discourteous conduct of the monarch, changed the eventful impulse. She forced the smile back to her face again, and gathering a mass of fresh flowers up with both hands, showered them down upon the passing cavalcade—but in a contrary direction from that which the king had taken. This action was greeted by another tremendous shout which was renewed and prolonged with wild enthusiasm, for the ladies on the balcony had parted, and for an instant the gentle princess was revealed, trembling and ready to sink with agitation, a little behind her mother.

For the third time these cheers had been renewed, when half a dozen marshals came galloping through the crowd, waving their truncheons and scattering the people in their progress. The king had sent back orders for the procession to hasten its march. His own chariot had been put in rapid motion, and before the half fainting princess could find strength to lift her hand, the gorgeous cavalcade that had choked up every avenue to the palace, was galloping onward with helmets in the air, and scarfs streaming back upon the wind, one and all followed the new king. The widow and daughter of the proud Plantagenet stood almost alone in front of their princely residence. They saw the multitude heaving out of sight like the flashing waves of an ocean when the wind is high, and far from the distance came a muffled shout of "long live King Henry!—Long live the king!" But no cry for the Lady of York.

CHAPTER VI.

Oh! how terribly suspense can prey upon a sensitive heart! Months had gone by since the triumphal entrance of Henry in London—a parliament had been called. The coronation had taken place, and still the king gave no indication of a wish to redeem his pledge, and place the Yorkist Princess by his side upon the throne, which was in truth hers by inheritance.

Annoyed and secretly terrified by a consciousness that her own treachery might be the cause of Henry's reluctance to fulfil his compact—the queen dowager busied herself in making partisans wherever her influence could reach; but the Lady Elizabeth suffered in silence. Day by day the color on her cheek became fainter; the smile died from her lips, and a sad, patient expression settled on her sweet features.

On the day of the coronation she had never left her chamber. There in the dim light and buried in an easy chair, she sat for weary hours, listening

to the tumult which penetrated even the thick wall of the palace, till her heart sunk and her brain become fevered with intense feeling. At first her lips had quivered, and tears had dimmed her eyes when she thought of the coldness and perfidy of the man she had learned to love so deeply—but soon her sweet lips became hot and dry. Her eyes burned with painful brilliancy and her cheek was flushed with red. When Clara entered the chamber she found the poor lady in this fearful state, tossing to and fro in her chair, and murmuring wild and incoherent sentences, which exposed all the tortured feelings that had cast her into that dangerous state.

For three days and nights the devoted girl watched over her mistress. On the fourth day Clara arose from the bed-side and went to her own room. She drew forth the clothes which she had worn in her journey to Bosworth-field, and, arraying herself in them, left the palace.

Henry the Seventh was alone in his closet, lost in deep and, it would seem, unpleasant thought; for his lips were pressed hard together, and his dark brows were heavily knitted. A committee from parliament had just left him—the people were urgent that he should redeem the pledge which he had long since given, and place the heiress of York upon his throne. The barons who had been most ardent in his cause were becoming dissatisfied, and, even to his face, had urged the necessity of an alliance with the legitimate heiress of a throne they had but given to another, that it might the more surely be secured to.

During their interview the committee had not hesitated to urge his own illegitimate descent from John of Gout, as the most urgent reason why he should strengthen his uncertain claim by a union with the rightful heiress of York. It was this that had called the frown to his brow and the downward curve to his lips. His hatred of the house of York was deep and implacable, and, though seldom violent, he was both vindictive and selfish. But the vision of that sweet and gentle girl, whom he had wooed at Sherriff Hutton, would sometimes rise upon his mind with a pleasant influence, and but for the treachery proved upon her mother, and a belief that the Lady Elizabeth herself had listened favorably to the proposal of a union with her uncle, he would, both from interest and inclination, have claimed her for his bride.

As Henry sat pondering over these conflicting thoughts a page entered the closet and presented a ring, which he said had been brought to the palace by a page in livery, who claimed admittance to his presence.

Henry recognized the jewel, and gave orders that the bearer should be admitted.

When the seeming page appeared, Henry reached forth his hand and received him with great courtesy.

"Thou hast been long in claiming the reward of thy services," he said, kindly raising the boy from his knees before they had touched the floor, "our friends are not often so remiss."

"Sire," said the disguised Clara, almost breathless with agitation, "I have come—I am here not on my own behalf, but I could not remain silent while a being so pure, so good, was suffering and heart broken under an unjust imputation. I have but now left the bed-side of the Lady Elizabeth."

"Thou! thou at the bed-side of the princess! Have a care, braggart boy."

"I am neither braggart, sire, nor the boy I seem," replied Clara, regaining some degree of self-composure—"but only a simple maiden who took this disguise in order to do a service for those who have been kind to me—I saw the Lady Elizabeth about to be sacrificed to a man whom she detested."

"Ha—art thou certain of this—certain that the princess did not encourage the suit of Richard?" cried the king, forgetting his astonishment at the successful disguise that had been practised on him, in the deeper interest which he felt in the question.

"So sure," replied Clara, "that I saw her fall back upon her pillow as if dead when it was first mentioned to her!"

"Ah, is this so?" muttered the king.

"It was our last hope, sire," replied Clara—"Dorset knew that they would sacrifice his sister and your hopes of the crown together—while under arrest he found means to place the task of informing you in my feeble hands—my lady could look to no one but her betrothed husband for redemption from the terrible union that awaited her. By chance the queen dowager gave me the papers, with orders to find a messenger and forward them to the army—I knew not whom to trust, so disguised myself and set forth for the camp. It was a rash act, and unwomanly perhaps, but—"

"It was a brave act, maiden, and bravely shall it be rewarded," cried Henry, "but the Lady Elizabeth, was she aware of this enterprize?"

"She knew that Dorset was in league with your friends, sire—she knew that her humble waiting-woman would die to serve her, but to this hour she is ignorant of the knowledge you have obtained, and in sooth, of all her mother's plans save that of uniting her with Richard."

"Can this be true?" murmured Henry to himself—"can she indeed be ignorant of all that my suspicions have charged her with?"

Clara sunk to her knees and lifted her beautiful face beaming with generous enthusiasm to the king.

"Oh, sire, believe nothing to her prejudice, she is the sweetest, the most pure and noble lady upon the broad earth! Could you see her now worn out with suspense—cast upon a sick bed, and lying like a broken lily on the pillow from which she may never rise again."

"Ha, is the princess ill?" cried Henry with a slight start—"ill and suffering?"

"Could you have witnessed the anguish that drank the blood from her cheek, though she never spoke of it—could you but hear the sad, sweet tones with which, in her worst delirium, she strives to excuse the neglect which the whole nation feels—could you see her as she was but an hour ago, pressing her lips to the picture which we found against her heart when she was taken ill, murmuring over the words which she fancies were said to her a long time ago at Sherriff Hutton. Oh, sire, could your grace but witness this, your heart would repent itself of the slight which has been given to the sweet lady."

Once more King Henry raised the generous girl from her knees. His eye was bright; the cloud had left his brow, and he held the little hand which he had taken after the young girl had risen to her feet.

"The Lady Elizabeth has an eloquent defender," he said, while one of the smiles which seldom illuminated his features lighted up his whole face, "say nothing of this visit! To-morrow the princess shall hear from us—meantime what can we offer the brave page in redemption of this little ring?"

"I have no wish—no desire," Clara hesitated.

"What, none? The Marquis of Dorset seemed more willing to give us his confidence but a few days gone by. Shall we confer the boon on him which his pretty page has so gallantly earned?"

The blood rushed over Clara's face, and her eyes drooped to the floor. "The marquis overrates my poor efforts to serve his noble sister," she said in a low voice—"have I your grace's permission to withdraw?"

"Yes, farewell now, sweet maiden, but it shall go hard with us if we find not some way to reward this devotion to our noble bride."

With these words Henry took leave of his strange visitor.

CHAPTER VII.

ONCE more the city of London was a scene of rejoicing. Henry the Seventh stood before the altar and by his side was Elizabeth of York—the cathedral was crowded with the nobility of the land. The burst of music which had heralded the appearance of the illustrious pair as they approached the altar, was still sighing among the fretted arches. Ladies of royal blood stood near

the bride, with the snowy fold of her train grasped in their patrician hands. Her arms and neck were lighted up with diamonds, and a tiara of roses flashed upon her brow, the red ones formed of magnificent rubies, the white of pure diamonds. The smaller stones clustered in the heart of the flower, gradually increasing in size till they took the form and effect of half open buds, and the whole was relieved by leaves of large emeralds. As the royal pair turned from the altar a ray of sunshine flashed upon this insignia of their houses, thus beautifully blended on the pure forehead of the bride—a murmur of admiration ran through the cathedral, and was taken up by the multitude without—a clash of bells proclaimed the completion of the nuptial rites, and once more the cry of "Long live King Henry! Long live Elizabeth of York!" rung out.

As this shout fell upon the ear of King Henry he bent his smiling eyes on the cheek of his bride, and pressed the little hand that lay quivering like a live bird in his—and thus in a bond of love the houses of York and Lancaster were connected forever.

CHAPTER VIII.

SOME few days after the marriage of her daughter, the queen dowager was surprised by a summons to attend her royal son-in-law at his palace. Up to this hour she had been treated with calm and chilling neglect by the monarch, and this peremptory summons was well calculated to excite alarm rather than any other feeling.

She found Henry in the young queen's apartment—the Marquis of Dorset and Clara were also present, and by the door, apparently on her usual attendance, near the royal bride, with whom she had become a favorite, stood dame Alice.

The queen dowager entered the room with a haughty bearing, but there was less color than usual on her cheek, and her eye wavered in its glance as she approached the king. Contrary to her expectations, Henry stepped forward to receive her with grave but courteous politeness.

"We have desired your presence, madam," he said, "in order to gain your sanction to the consent which we have given to the wishes of your son and our own gallant follower, the marquis. It seems that an attachment has long existed, if we are not misinformed, with your tacit approval, between him and the sweet maiden by his side. Is he wrong in supposing that your consent to their union will be given freely as that of his king has been?"

A flash of red shooting over the queen's cheek bespoke the angry surprise with which this address was heard, and her voice quivered with suppressed rage as she replied.

"The lady is of lowly birth, and no fitting match for the Marquis of Dorset," she said with a stern glance at her son.

"But she is fair and good," replied the king.

"This is strange, sire," cried the dowager, almost breathless with amazement. "It is not a secret that your grace holds no great love toward our house; but this haste to degrade it by a base alliance seems but a sorry method of revenge."

As these words escaped the dowager, dame Alice started and moved a pace forward, but she checked herself and remained motionless again, though Clara turned an appealing look toward her, and clasped her hands in a wild hope that she would come to her aid.

"The king has power to ennoble, and your brave son shall find no portionless bride in the lady with whom it is our will to unite him. He leads her to the altar a countess, and dowered richly as a ward of the crown."

"Not by letters patent, sire—it is noble birth not acquired nobility that I insist upon in the bride of my son," said the queen, haughtily.

"Methinks if Edward of York had been of the same opinion," replied Henry with a smile of scorn, which even his feeling could not suppress, "Elizabeth Woodville and her whole family might have lacked something of the right to reject an alliance with one whom it is our pleasure to ennoble."

The dowager was completely overpowered with anger, which though it almost choked her, she dared not express. Before she could find words for a temperate reply, Clara left Dorset's side, and approaching the king knelt before him.

"Let me entreat you, sire, forego the generous intentions you have expressed—in his love for me the generous marquis would have forgotten my lowly birth. But I must ever remember it. Subject to the scorn and taunts of his family, my life would be one perpetual humiliation. Once I had another dream, but it is over now—his royal mother is too surely right—the son and brother of queens should not wed with a plebeian—let him seek among the nobility of the land for a bride. For me, alas, I am but a humble waiting-woman!"

"And as such, even without either rank or dower, thou art my wife—my own beloved, honored lady. Before all the nobility in the land will I wed thee!" cried Dorset, springing forward and lifting the young girl from her knees.

"Dorset, are you mad—stark mad? I will never submit to this degradation," cried the queen dowager.

"Oh, mother!" said Dorset, bending his fine eyes upon the angry face turned toward him, with that pleading eloquence which has so much

effect upon a woman, "oh! mother, you know love is no consultor of rank! If King Edward had listened to the remonstrance of pride, my own beautiful mother had been but a simple gentlewoman, and her son might have possessed no title to bestow. Blame him not for the same sweet weakness that made a king your husband."

A smile struggled for a moment over the angry features of the queen, but they darkened the next instant, and she turned abruptly away.

"It is in vain," she said, "no son of mine shall match with a plebeian. The good woman who stands at the door yonder to guard the privacy of this scene, must smile at the presumption of her daughter."

"Not so, lady," cried Alice, suddenly leaving her station and advancing directly to the king—

"I did but wait to try how far pride might win over affection in its struggle with the young. I have now a duty to perform. This young maiden, though more than a child to my heart, is no daughter of mine, but the heiress of a house that may well claim alliance with the proudest of the realm."

For a moment the whole group were struck dumb with consternation. Clara sprang forward, clasped her hands and stood breathless by the side of her foster mother.

"And who are her parents?" inquired the dowager after a moment of profound silence.

"Lady, remember this secret has been forced from me by your own overbearing pride," said Alice firmly. Then turning with a look of fond and regretful affection toward the young girl, she took her hand and kissed it.

"Her mother was known as the Lady Eleanor Talbot," she said, fixing her eyes steadily on the dowager.

The haughty woman turned white as death, she cast a startled look around the group, and her voice did not rise above a whisper as she lifted her shrinking eyes to the face of the old woman, and uttered the single question.

"Her father, who was he?"

Alice still looked firmly in her face and replied, "Her father, lady, was King Edward the Fourth."

The queen dowager started back, and but for Dorset, who caught her in his arms, would have fallen to the floor. His own face was perfectly colorless, and King Henry seemed turning into marble. Clara unclasped her hands and stood in breathless awe gazing on the old woman, and for several minutes the whole group remained pale and motionless in the dim light which fell through the stained glass of a neighboring window, like a collection of statues grouped together in the centre of the apartment.

The dowager was the first to recover herself. She arose from the arms of her son, and, approaching Clara, laid a trembling hand on her arm.

"Come hither," she said, drawing the bewildered girl to a window, and tossing back the ringlets from her forehead, while she gazed intensely over the sweet features thus rudely exposed.

"It may be so," she said, tapping the now crimson cheek which she had been scrutinizing, and turning to her son with a smile of insolent triumph, "it may be so! But son of mine can never wed the illegitimate child even of a king."

"Madam," cried Alice, with stern dignity—"Lady Eleanor Talbot was the *wife* of Edward the Fourth!"

Contending emotions seemed choking the haughty dowager.

"The proof—the proof!" she cried in a hoarse whisper.

Alice knelt before the king and placed a package in his hand.

"They were married, sire, by the Bishop of Bath. I was an attendant of the Lady Eleanor and a witness to the marriage. The other witness is dead, and so is the good bishop; but these papers will attest to the truth of my story."

Henry took the papers, and moving toward the window, read them through. His face changed as he proceeded, and he examined them closely a second time. After awhile he returned to the group and addressed Alice.

"These papers bear evidence of a marriage—but the child—how are we to be certain that this is the Lady Eleanor's child?"

"I was present at her birth, sire, she has been under my sole care since that day, until she entered the queen's household—there exist other witnesses who can swear to her identity."

The king paused a moment, glanced over the papers again, and then pursued his questions.

"When did the Lady Eleanor die?" he said.

"She died here in London but a few days after the union of King Edward with this lady. Her marriage had been kept a profound secret, for though she had given birth to a daughter, the child passed as mine, and no one, save those in our confidence, suspected the truth. For months Edward had not visited his wife, and his desertion was killing her. Day by day I saw her strength failing. But, though broken hearted with grief, she lived on, and tried to encourage hope for her child's sake. At length a rumor reached us that Edward had become enamored of another, and was about to wed her. From that time the Lady Eleanor seemed endowed with supernatural strength. She went to the Bishop of Bath,

and, on her knees, besought him to give her written proofs of the marriage he had solemnized. When they were obtained, she came with myself and the child, accompanied only by a slight band of followers up to London. She did not reveal her plans, but probably intended to seek an interview with the king.

"We arrived in the morning. In less than an hour after a noise in the street drew the attention of Lady Eleanor. She arose, took her child by the hand and went to the window. An open chariot was in the street, surrounded by outriders, and in it, flushed with all the pride of beauty and health, the Lady Eleanor saw her husband. By his side was a lady; and on her those bright, glorious and winning smiles were lavished which had won the heart he was breaking. Before the populace he raised the fair hand of his companion to his lips, and the gay laugh rose mockingly to the ear of my poor lady—she staggered back from the window, and I caught her in my arms. Her face was like marble, but the blue veins on her forehead and neck were swelling as if they would break through—a spasm of pain seemed to shoot over her, and then drops of blood sprang to her lips.

"That night I swore to protect the child, but never to force it upon the notice of the king—never to claim its birth-right while he lived—she was thoughtful of his reputation with the people, and studied his welfare even at the expense of her child—at that very time he was wedded privately to Elizabeth Woodville. He might have supposed that his child died with the mother, for from that day he seemed to have forgotten that she ever existed. Since Edward's death there has been little chance of safety for any of his children—had I proclaimed the birth of his eldest child her life might have been the forfeit. Sire, I have explained all."

While Alice had been speaking, the queen dowager had formed a new web of intrigue in her mind. If the story of her birth was proved, Clara must be heir to the throne—might not another revolution place Dorset, as her husband, in the place which Henry occupied? It was a vague thought, but she acted upon it instantly.

"Let me read the documents," she said, reaching forth her hand toward the table where Henry had laid them. "If this story be true I no longer withhold my consent!"

Henry read her thoughts and turned to resume the papers, but Alice had secured them again, and placed them in the hands of Clara.

The young girl grasped them in both hands, and lifted her sparkling eyes to the face of her lover. A grave, almost painful expression met her glance—the light faded from her eyes, and,

with the papers still clasped lightly in her hand, she stood, for a time, perfectly motionless and gazing on the floor. At last she lifted her eyes, and they fell upon the young queen—the mistress who had been so kind in her lowly estate, who had lavished almost a sister's love upon the humble girl, was now to dispute her birthright.

Elizabeth was looking anxiously at her husband, her own interest in the scene seemed lost in gentle and tender solicitude for him. He was gazing sternly upon Clara, and the wife also looked that way. Their eyes met, those of the young queen were full of tears; Clara sprang to the casement, dashed it open, and tearing the papers in a thousand fragments flung them to the wind.

"It was but for a moment—oh, forgive me! It was only a single thought!" she said, falling upon her knees before Elizabeth, and covering her hands with tears and kisses—"it was only for Dorset I had that one ambitious wish."

"My sister!" The queen could utter no more, but she fell forward upon Clara's bosom—the arms of those two generous young creatures interlaced, and their lips met for the first time.

"Oh! now I know why you could never treat me as a menial—why my services were rendered in love but never with awe!" said Clara, lifting her bright face from the bosom of her sister.

"I always loved you, Clara," was the sweet murmur that fell on her ear.

"And I—did any one ever love you as I have done?" said a rich, but tremulous voice, while Clara was lifted from her knees and half supported by the strong arm of Dorset.

"Remember," murmured Clara, looking into his eyes with a half sad, half playful smile, "I have cast away everything but your love!"

"And that shall repay you for all this generous sacrifice," replied Dorset, returning her glance with one of eloquent affection.

"Lady," said King Henry, taking Clara's hand and speaking with animation, "you have nobly destroyed papers that might have flung our kingdom into civil strife again. There can be no recompense for this generous act, but all that a monarch can do to testify his gratitude, shall be done. Crown lands, worth treble the value of your maternal inheritance, shall be yours, and with them any rank which letter's patent can secure to you."

"And think you that I will submit to this?" cried the dowager. "If she is a king's daughter he weds her as such, or not at all."

"Madam, this obstinacy has been carried too far," said Henry in a stern voice, and unlocking a cabinet he took forth a package of papers and held them before her.

She turned deadly pale, for they were the letters she had sent to Lord Stanley before the battle of Bosworth-field.

"Have we your full consent, madam, to the union of these young persons?" said Henry, tapping the papers sternly with his finger.

The queen dowager bent her head, and this was all the assent she had power to give.

NOTE.—It was asserted that before espousing the Lady Elizabeth Grey, Edward paid court to the Lady Eleanor Talbot, daughter of the Earl of Threusburg, and, being repulsed by the virtue of that lady, he was obliged, ere he could obtain her, to consent to a private marriage without witnesses by Hellington, Bishop of Bath, who afterward divulged the secret.—*Sir Thomas More*, p 496.

